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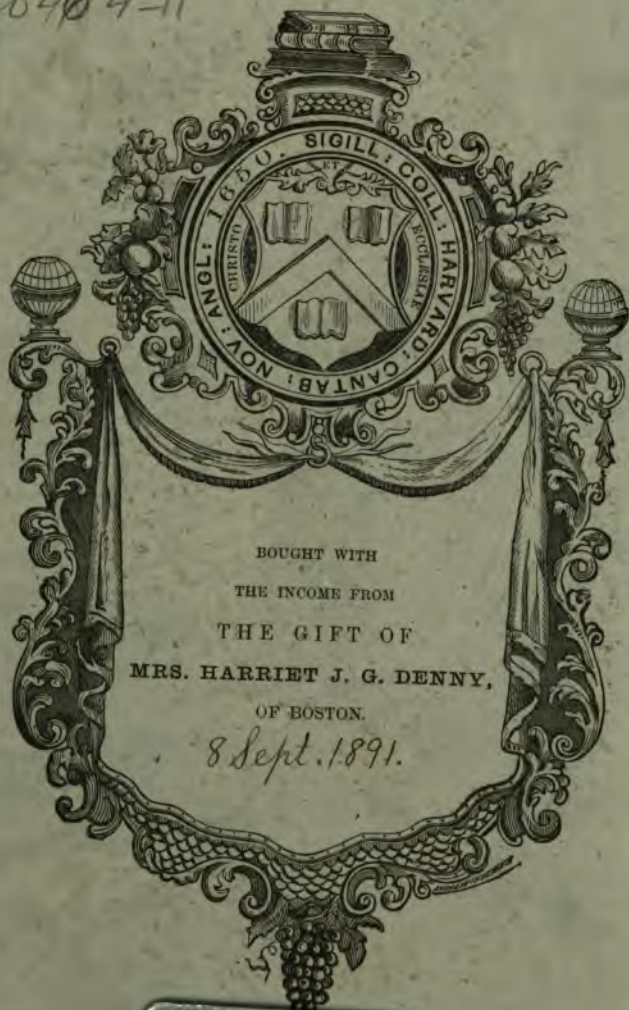
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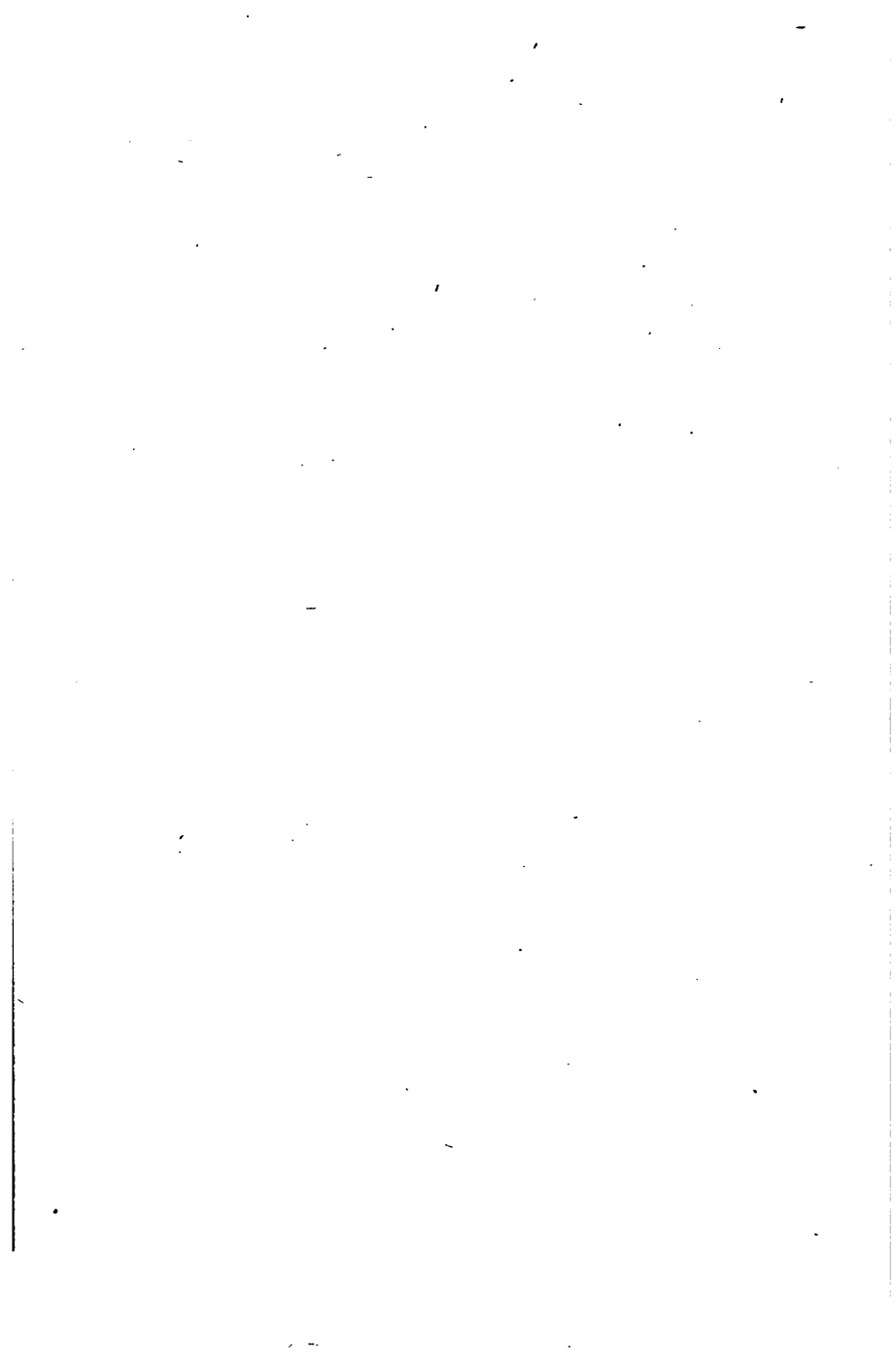
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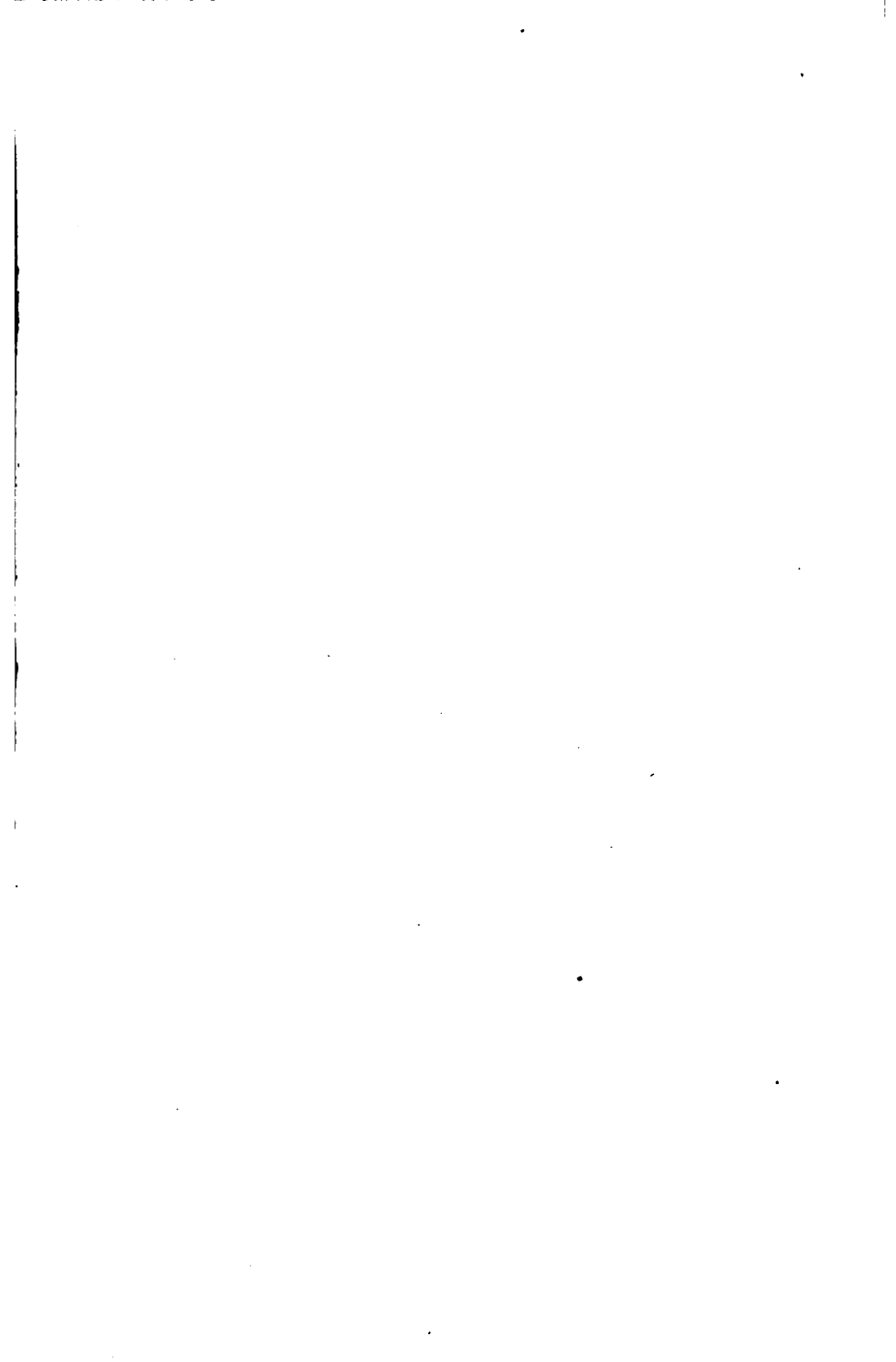


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COMPANIONS OF MY SOLITUDE

AND

ESSAYS

COMPANIONS
OF
MY SOLITUDE.

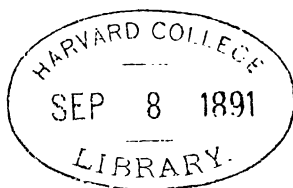
ESSAYS
WRITTEN IN THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS;
AND
AN ESSAY ON ORGANIZATION IN DAILY LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.'

Sir Arthur Cooper

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE,
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COMPANIONS OF MY SOLITUDE.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN in the country, I live much alone ; and, as I wander over downs and commons and through lanes with lofty hedges, many thoughts come into my mind. I find, too, that the same ones come again and again, and are spiritual companions. At times they insist upon being with me, and are resolutely intrusive. I think I will describe them, that so I may have more mastery over them. Instead of suffering them to haunt me as vague faces and half-fashioned resemblances, I will make them into distinct pictures, which I can give away, or hang up in my room, turning them, if I please, with their faces to the wall ; and, in short, be free to do what I like with them.

Ellesmere will then be able to deride them at his pleasure ; and so they will go through the alembic of sarcasm : Dunsford will have something more to approve, or rebuke ; Lucy something more to love, or to hate. Even my dogs and my trees will be the better for this work, as, when it is done, they will, perhaps, have a more disengaged atten-

tion from me. Faithful, steadfast creatures, both dogs and trees ; how easy and charming is your converse with me compared with the eager, exclusive, anxious way in which the creations of my own brain, who at least should have some filial love and respect for me, insist upon my attention.

It was a thoroughly English day to-day, sombre and quiet, the sky coming close to the earth, and everything seeming to be of one colour. I wandered over the downs, not heeding much which way I went, and driven by one set of thoughts which of late have had great hold upon me.

I think often of the hopes of the race here, of what is to become of our western civilisation, and what can be made of it. Others may pursue science or art, and I long to do so too ; but I cannot help thinking of the state and fortunes of large masses of mankind, and hoping that thought may do something for them. After all my cogitations, my mind generally returns to one thing, the education of the people. For want of general cultivation how greatly individual excellence is crippled. Of what avail, for example, is it for any one of us to have surmounted any social terror, or any superstition, while his neighbours lie sunk in it ? His conduct in reference to them becomes a constant care and burden.

Meditating upon general improvement, I often think a great deal about the climate in these parts of the world ; and I see that without much husbandry of our means and

resources, it is difficult for us to be anything but low barbarians. The difficulty of living at all in a cold, damp, destructive climate is great. Socrates went about with very scanty clothing, and men praise his wisdom in caring so little for the goods of this life. He ate sparingly, and of mean food. That is not the way, I suspect, that we can make a philosopher here. There are people who would deride one for saying this, and would contend that it gives too much weight to worldly things. But I suspect they are misled by notions borrowed from Eastern climates. Here we must make prudence one of the substantial virtues.

One thing, though, I see, and that is, that there is a quantity of misplaced labour, of labour which is not consumed in stern contest with the rugged world around us, in the endeavour to compel Nature to give us our birth-right, but in fighting with "strong delusions" of all kinds ; or rather in putting up obstacles which we laboriously knock down again, in making Chinese mazes between us and objects we have daily need of, and where we should have only the shortest possible line to go. As I have said elsewhere, half the labour of the world is pure loss—the work of Sisyphus rolling up stones to come down again inevitably.

Law, for example, what a loss is there ; of time, of heart, of love, of leisure ! There are good men whose minds are set upon improving the law ; but I doubt whether any of them are prepared to go far enough. Here again, we must hope most from general improvement of

the people. Perhaps, though, some one great genius will do something for us. I have often fancied that a man might play the part of Brutus in the law. He might simulate madness in order to insure freedom. He might make himself a great lawyer, rise to eminence in the profession, and then turn round and say, "I am not going to enjoy this high seat and dignity; but intend henceforward to be an advocate for the people of this country against the myriad oppressions and vexations of the law. No Chancellorships or Chief-Justiceships for me. I have only pretended to be this slave in order that you should not say that I am an untried and unpractical man—that I do not understand your mysteries."

This, of course, is not the dramatic way in which such a thing would be done. But there is greatness enough in the world for it to be done. If no lawyer rises up to fill the place which my imagination has assigned for him, we must hope that statesmen will do something for us in this matter, that they will eventually protect us (though, hitherto, they never have done so) from lawyers.

There are many things done now in the law at great expense by private individuals which ought to be done for all by officers of the State. It is as if each individual had to make a road for himself whenever he went out, instead of using the king's highway.

Many of the worst things in the profession take place low down in it. I am not sure that I would not try the plan of having public notaries with very extensive functions, subjecting them to official control. What exclaima-

tions about freedom we should hear, I daresay, if any large measure of this kind were proposed ; which exclamations and their consequences have long been, in my mind, a chief obstacle to our possessing the reality of freedom. What difference is it whether I am a slave to my lawyer, or subject indirectly to more official control in the changing of my property? I do not know a meaner and sadder portion of a man's existence, or one more likely to be full of impatient sorrow, than that which he spends in waiting at the offices of lawyers.

It is to be observed that all satire falls short when aimed against the practices in the law. No man can imagine, not Swift himself, things more shameful, absurd, and grotesque than the things which do take place daily in the law. Satire becomes merely narrative. A modern novelist depicts a man ruined by a legacy of a thousand pounds, and sleeping under a four-legged table, because it reminded him of the days when he used to sleep in a four-post bed. This last touch about the bed is humorous, but the substance of the story is dry narrative only.

These evils are not of yesterday, or of this country only ; I observe that the first Spanish colonists in America write home to the Government begging them not to allow lawyers to come to the colony.

At the same time, we must not forget how many of the evils attributed solely to the proceedings of lawyers result from the want of knowledge of business in the world in general, and its inaptness for business, the anxiety to

arrange more and for longer time than is wise or possible, and the occasional trusting of affairs to women, who in our country are brought up to be utterly incompetent to the management of affairs. Still, with all these allowances, and taking care to admit, as we must if we have any fairness, that notwithstanding the element of chicanery and perverse small-mindedness in which they are involved, there are many admirable and very high-minded men to be found in all grades of the law (perhaps a more curious instance of the power of the human being to maintain its structure unimpaired in the midst of a hostile element, than that a man should be able to abide in a heated oven)—admitting all these extenuating circumstances, we must nevertheless declare, as I set out by saying, that law affords a notable example of loss of time, of heart, of love, of leisure.¹

Well, then, as another instance of misplaced labour, I suppose we must take a good deal of what goes on in schools and colleges, and, indeed, in parliaments and other assemblages of men, not to speak of the wider waste of means and labour which prevails in all physical works—such as buildings, furniture, decorations; and not merely waste but obstruction, so that if there were a good angel attendant on the human race, with power to act on

¹ Many of the adjuncts and circumstances of the law are calculated to maintain it as a mystery: I allude to the uncouth form and size of deeds, the antiquated words, the unusual kind of handwriting. Physicians' prescriptions may have a better effect for being expressed mysteriously, but legal matters cannot surely be made too clear, even in the merest minutiae.

earth, it would destroy as fast as made a considerable portion of men's productions, as the kindest thing which could be done for man and the best instruction for him.

The truth is, we must considerably address ourselves to cope with Nature. Here again, too, we come to the want of more extended and general cultivation, for otherwise we cannot fully enjoy or profit by scientific discovery. At present a man in a civilised country is surrounded by things which are greater than he is; he does not understand them, cannot regulate them, cannot mend them.

This ignorance proceeds in some respects from division of labour. A man knows how to make a pin's head admirably, but is afraid to handle or give an opinion upon things which he has not daily knowledge of. This applies not only to physical things, but to law, church, state, and the arts and sciences generally.

After all, the advancement of the world depends upon the use of small balances of advantage over disadvantage; for there is compensation everywhere and in everything. No one discovery resuscitates the world; certainly no physical one. Each new good thought, or word, or deed, brings its shadow with it; and as I have just said, it is upon the small balances of gain that we get on at all. Often, too, this occurs indirectly, as when moral gains give physical gains, and these again give room for further moral and intellectual culture.

Frequently it seems as if the faculties of man were not quite adequate as yet to his situation. This is perhaps more to be seen in contemplating individuals than in

looking at mankind in general. The individual seems the sport of circumstance. When Napoleon invaded Russia (the proximate cause of his downfall), though doubtless there were very adverse and unfortunate circumstances attendant upon that invasion, yet, upon the whole, it gave a good opportunity for working out the errors of the man's mind and system. The circumstances were not unfair, as we may say, against him. Most prosperous men, perhaps I should say most men, have in the course of their lives their campaign in Russia—when they strain their fortune to the uttermost, and often it breaks under them. I did not mean anything like this when I said that the individual seems the sport of circumstance. Neither did I mean that small continuous faults and misdoings have considerable effect upon a man, such as the errors and vices of youth, which are silently put down to a man from day to day, like his reckoning at an inn. But I alluded to those very unfortunate concurrences of circumstances, which most men's lives will tell them of, where a man, from some small error or omission, from some light carelessness or overtrust, in thoughtless innocence or inexperience, gets entangled in a web of adverse circumstances, which will be company for him on sleepless nights and anxious days throughout a large part of his life. Were success in life (morally or physically) the main object here, it certainly would seem as if a little more faculty in man were sadly needed. A similar thing occurs often to the body, when a man, from some small mischance or oversight, lays the

beginning of a disease which shall depress and enfeeble him while he sojourns upon earth. And it seems, when he looks back, as if such a little thing would have saved him; if he had not crossed over the road, if he had not gone to see his friend on that particular day, if the dust had not been so unpleasant on that occasion, the whole course of his life would have been different. Living, as we do, in the midst of stern gigantic laws, which crush everything down that comes in their way, which know no excuses, admit of no small errors, never send a man back to learn his lesson and try him again, but are as inexorable as Fate—living, I say, with such powers above us (unseen, too, for the most part), it does seem as if the faculties of man were hardly as yet adequate to his situation here.

Such considerations as the above tend to charity and humility; and they point also to the existence of a future state. As regards charity, for example, a man might extend to others the ineffable tenderness which he has for some of his own sins and errors, because he knows the whole history of them; and though, taken at a particular point, they appear very large and very black, he knew them in their early days when they were play-fellows instead of tyrant demons. There are others which he cannot so well smooth over, because he knows that in their case inward proclivity coincided with outward temptation; and, if he is a just man, he is well aware that if he had not erred here he would have erred there;

that experience, even at famine price, was necessary for him in those matters. But, in considering the misdoings and misfortunes of others, he may as well begin, at least, by thinking that they are of the class which he has found from his own experience to contain a larger amount of what we call ill-fortune than of anything like evil disposition. For time and chance, says the Preacher, happen to all men.

Thus I thought in my walk this dull and dreary afternoon, till the rising of the moon and the return from school of the children with their satchels coming over the down warned me, too, that it was time to return home : and so, trying not to think any more of these things, I looked at the bare beech-trees, still beautiful, and the dull sheep-ponds scattered here and there, and thought that the country even in winter and in these northern regions, like a great man in adversity and just disgrace, was still to be looked at with hopeful tenderness, even if, in the man's case, there must also be somewhat of respectful condemnation. As I neared home I comforted myself, too, by thinking that the inhabitants of sunnier climes do not know how winning and joyful is the look of the chimney-tops of our homes in the midst of what to them would seem most desolate and dreary.

CHAPTER II.

I SUPPOSE it has happened to most men who observe their thoughts at all, to notice how some expression returns again and again in the course of their meditations, or, indeed, of their business, forming as it were a refrain to all they think, or do, for any given day. Sometimes, too, this refrain has no particular concern with the thought or business of the day ; but seems as if it belonged to some undercurrent of thought and feeling. This at least is what I experienced to-day myself, being haunted by a bit of old Spanish poetry, which obtruded itself, sometimes inopportunately, sometimes not so, in the midst of all my work or play. The words were these :—

“ *Quan presto se va el placer.*

Como despues de acordado

Da dolor ;

Como, al nuestro parecer,

Qualquiera tiempo pasado

Fué mejor.”

How quickly passes pleasure away.

How after being granted

It gives pain ;

How in our opinion

Any past time

Was better (than that we passed in pleasure).

It was not that I agreed with the sentiment, except

as applied to vicious pleasure, being rather of Sydney Smith's mind, that the remembrance of past pleasure is present pleasure; but I suppose the words chimed in with reflections on the past which formed the undercurrent of my thoughts, as I went through the wood of beeches which bounded my walk to-day.

A critique had just been sent me of some literary production, in which the reviewer was very gracious in noticing the calmness and moderation of the author. "Ah, my friend," thought I to myself, "how differently you would write if you did but know the man as I do, and were aware what a fierce fellow he is with all his outward smoothness, hardly ruling at times thoughts which are anything but calm and moderate, yet struggling to be just, and knowing that violence is always lost!"

From that I went on to consider how intense is the loneliness for the most part of any man who endeavours to think—like the Nile wandering on through a desert country, with no tributary streams to cheer and aid it, and to be lost in sympathy with its main current. In politics, for example, such a man will have too affectionate a regard for the people to be a democrat; he would as soon leave his own children without guidance; and, on the other hand, he will have too great a regard for merit and fitness to be an aristocrat. He will find no one plank to walk up and down consistently; and will be always looking beyond measures which satisfy other men; and seeing perhaps that as regards politics themselves, greater things are to be done out of them than in them.

I was silent in thought for a moment, and then my refrain came back again—

“Qualquiera tiempo pasado
Fué mejor.”

And in a moment I went back, not to the pleasures, but to the ambitious hopes and projects of youth. And when a man does reflect upon the ambitions which are as characteristic of that period of life as reckless courage or elastic step, and finds that at each stage of his journey since, some hope has dropped off as too burdensome, or too romantic, till at last it is enough for him only to carry himself at all upright in this troublesome world—what thoughts come back upon him! How he meditates upon his own errors and shortcomings, and sees that he has had not only the hardness, oiliness, and imperturbability of the world to contend with, but that he himself has generally been his worst antagonist.

In this mood, I might have thrown myself upon the mound under a green beech-tree that was near, the king of the woods, and uttered many lamentations; but instead of doing anything of the kind, I walked sedately by it; for as we go on in life, we find we cannot afford excitement, and we learn to be parsimonious in our emotions. Again I muttered,

“Qualquiera tiempo pasado
Fué mejor.”

And I threw forward these words into the future, as if I were already blaming any tendency to unnecessary emotion.

I entered now into another vein of thought, considering that kind Nature would not allow a man to be so very wise, nor, for the sake of any good he might do to others, permit him to forfeit the benefit he must derive from his own errors, failures, and shortcomings. You may mean well, she says, and you might expect that I should give you any extraordinary furtherance, and not suffer you to be plagued with drawbacks and errors of your own, that so you might do your work undisturbed: but I love you too well for that. I sacrifice no one child for the benefit of the rest. You all must learn humility.

I felt the truth of these words, and thereupon gave myself up to more cheerful thoughts. How much cheerfulness there is, by the way, in humility. I listened to the cuckoo in the woods, hearing his tiresome but welcome noise for the first time in the year, and I looked out for the wild-flowers that were just beginning to show themselves, and thought that, from the names of flowers, it is evident that, in former days, poets and scholars must have lived in the country and looked well at Nature. Else how came all these picturesque and poetical names, "Love in idleness," "Venus's looking-glass," and such like?

But as the shades of evening came on in the wood my thoughts went away from these simple topics; the refrain, too,

"Quan presto se va el placer,"

sounded in my ears again; and I passed on to medita-

tions of like colour to those in the former part of my walk. In addition to the other hindrances I alluded to before, this also must come home to the mind of many a man of the present generation—how he is to discern, much more to teach, even in small things, without having clear views, or distinct convictions, upon some of the greatest matters—upon religious questions for instance? And yet I suppose it must be tried. Even a man of Goethe's immense industry and great intellectual resources, feared to throw himself upon the sea of biblical criticism. But at the same time, how poor, timid, and tentative must be all discourse built upon inferior motives. Ah, if we could but discern what is the right way and the highest way!

These doubts, which beset men upon many of the greatest matters, are the direct result of the lies and falsification of our predecessors. Sometimes when we look at the frightful errors which metaphorical expressions may have introduced, I do not wonder that Plato spoke in the hardest manner of Poets. But man cannot narrate without metaphors, so much more does he see in every transaction than the bare circumstances.

When I was at Milan and saw the glory of that town, the Last Supper, by Leonardo da Vinci, I could not help thinking, as my way is, many things not, perhaps, very closely connected with that grand work, but which it suggested to my mind. At first you may be disappointed in finding the figures so much faded, but soon, with patient looking, much comes into view; and after

marvelling at the inexpressible beauty which still remains, you find to your astonishment that no picture, no print, perhaps no description, has adequately represented what you can still trace in this work. Not only has it not been represented, but it has been utterly misrepresented. The copyist thought he could tell the story better than the painter, and where the outlines are dim, was not content to leave them so, but must insert something of his own which is clearly wrong. This, I thought, is the way of most translation, and I might add, of most portrait-painting and nearly all criticism. And it occurred to me that the written history of the world was very like the prints of this fresco—namely, a clear account, a good deal of it utterly wrong, of what at first hand is considerably obliterated, and which, except in minds of the highest powers of imagination, to be a clear conception can hardly be a just one.

And then, carrying my application still further to the most important of all histories, I thought how the simple majesty of the original transaction had probably suffered a like misconception, from the fading of the material narrative, and still more from the weak inventions of those who could not represent accurately, and were impatient of any dimness (to their eyes) in the divine original.

I often fancy how I should like to direct the intellectual efforts of men ; and if I had the power, how frequently I should direct them to those great subjects in metaphysics and theology which now men shun.

What patient labour and what intellectual power are often bestowed in coming to a decision on any cause which involves much worldly property. Might there not be some great hearing of any of the intellectual and spiritual difficulties which beset the paths of all thoughtful men in the present age ?

Church questions, for example, seem to require a vast investigation. As it is, a book or pamphlet is put forward on one side, then another on the other side, and somehow the opposing facts and arguments seldom come into each other's presence. ! And thus truth sustains great loss.

My own opinion is, if I can venture to say that I have an opinion, that what we ought to seek for is a church of the utmost width of doctrine, and with the most beautiful expression that can be devised for that doctrine—the most beautiful expression, I mean, in words, in deeds, in sculpture, and in sacred song ; which should have a simple easy grandeur in its proceedings that should please the elevated and poetical mind, charm the poor, and yet not lie open to just cavilling on the part of those somewhat hard, intellectual worshippers who must have a reason for everything ; which should have vitality and growth in it ; and which should attract and not repel those who love truth better than any creature.

Pondering these things in the silence of the downs, I at last neared home ; and found that the result of all my thoughts was that any would-be teacher must be

contented and humble, or, try to be so, in his efforts of any kind ; and that if the great questions can hardly be determined by man (divided, too, as he is from his brother in all ways), he must still try and do what he can on lower levels, hoping ever for more insight, and looking forward to the knowledge which may be gained by death.

CHAPTER III.

TO-DAY, as the weather was cold and boisterous, I could only walk under shelter of the yew hedge in my garden, which some gracious predecessor (all honour to him!) planted to keep off the dire north-west winds, and which, I fear, unless he was a very hardy plant himself, he did not live long enough to profit much by. Being so near home, my thoughts naturally took a domestic turn; and I vexed myself by thinking that I had received no letter from my little boy. This was owing to the new post-office regulations, which did not allow letters to go out from country places, or be delivered at such places, on a Sunday. Oh those Borgias, said I to myself, how much we have to blame them for! To be sure, I know pretty well what the letter would be.

“I hope you are well papa and I send you my love and I have got a kite and Uncle George’s dog is very fierce. His name is Nero which was a Roman emperor nearly quite white only he has got two black spots just over his nose And I send my love to mamma and the children and I am your own little boy and affectionate son,

LEONARD MILVERTON.”

Not a very important, certainly not a very artistic, production this letter, but still it has its interest for the foolish paternal mind, and I should like to have received it to-day. It is greatly owing to those Borgias that I have not received this letter. Most of my neighbours imagine that their little petitions were the cause of these post-office regulations ; but I beg to go somewhat further back, and I come to Pope Alexander the Sixth, and lay a great deal of blame on him. The pendulous folly of mankind oscillates as far in this direction as it has come from that ; and an absurd Puritan is only a correlative to a wicked Pope.)

From such reflections, I fell to considering Puritanism generally, and I am afraid I came to a different conclusion from that which would have been popular at any of the late public meetings ; but then I console myself by an aphorism of Ellesmere's, who is wont to remark, " How exactly proportioned to a man's ignorance of the subject is the noise he makes about it at a public meeting." Knowledge brings doubts and exceptions and limitations which, though occasionally some aids to truth, are all hindrances to vigorous statement.

But to go back to what I thought about Puritanism—for I endeavoured to methodise my thoughts, and the following is the course they took :—

What are the objects of life, as far as regards this world? Its first wants, I answer, namely food and raiment. What besides? Marrying and the rearing of children ; and, in general, the cultivation of the affections. So far Puritans would agree with us.

But suppose all these things to be tempered with gaiety and festivity: what element of wickedness has *necessarily* entered? None that I can perceive. Self-indulgence takes many forms; and we should bear in mind that there may be a sullen sensuality as well as a gay one.

But the truth is, there is a secret belief amongst some men that God is displeased with man's happiness; and in consequence they slink about creation, ashamed and afraid to enjoy anything.

They answer, We do not object to rational pleasures.

But who, my good people, shall exactly define rational pleasures? You are pleased with a flower; to cultivate flowers is what you call a rational pleasure: there are people, however, to whom a flower is somewhat insipid, but they perhaps dote upon music, which, however, is unfortunately not one of your rational pleasures—chiefly, as I believe, because it is mainly a social one. Why is there anything *necessarily* wrong in social pleasures? Certainly some of the most dangerous vices, such as pride, are found to flourish in solitude with more vigour than in society; and a man may be deady avaricious who has never even gone out to a tea-party.

Once I happened to overhear a dialogue somewhat similar to that which Charles Lamb, perhaps, only feigned to hear. I was travelling in a railway-carriage with a most precise-looking formal person, the Arch-Quaker, if there be such a person. His countenance was very noble, or had been so, before it was frozen up. He said nothing:

I felt a great respect for him. At last his mouth opened. I listened with attention : I had hitherto lived with foolish, gad-about, dinner-eating, dancing-people : now I was going to hear the words of retired wisdom ; when he thus addressed his young daughter sitting opposite, " Hast thee heard how Southamptons went lately ? " (in those days South-Western Railway shares were called Southamptons) ; and she replied with like gravity, giving him some information that she had picked up about Southamptons yesterday evening.

I leant back rather sickened as I thought what was probably the daily talk and the daily thoughts in that family, from which I conjectured all amusement was banished save that connected with intense money-getting.

Well, but, exclaims the advocate of Puritanism, I do not admit that my clients, on abjuring the pleasures of this world, fall into pride, or sullen sensuality, or intense money-getting. They only secure to themselves more time for works of charity and for the love of God.

You are an adroit advocate, and are careful, by not pushing your case too far, to give me the least possible room for reply. They secure to themselves more time for these good works you say. Do they do them ? But the truth is, in order to meet your remark and to extract the good there is in it, I must begin by saying that Puritanism, as far as it is an abnegation of self, is good, or may be so. But this is most surely the case, when it turns its sufferings and privations to utility. It

has always appeared to me that there is so much to be done in this world, that all self-inflicted suffering which cannot be turned to good account for others, is a loss—a loss, if you may so express it, to the spiritual world.

The Puritanism which I object to is that which avoids some pleasure, and exhausts in injurious comment and attack upon other people any leisure and force of mind which it may have gained by its abstinence from the pleasure.

I can understand and sympathise with the man who says, "I enjoy festivity, but I cannot go to the feast I am bidden to, to-night, for there are sick people who must be first attended to." But I do not love the man who stays away from the feast and employs his leisure in delivering a sour discourse on the wickedness of the others who are invited to the feast, and who go to it.

Moreover, this censoriousness is not only a sin, but the inventor of many sins. Indeed the manufacture of sins is so easy a manufacture, that I am convinced man could readily be persuaded that it was wicked to use the left leg as much as the right; whole congregations would only permit themselves to hop; and, what is more to our present point, would consider that when they walked in the ordinary fashion they were committing a deadly sin. Now, I should not think that the man who were to invent this sin would be a benefactor to the human race.

You often hear in a town or village, a bit of domestic history, which seems at first to militate against what I have been saying, but is in reality very consistent with it.

The story is of some poor man, and is apt to run thus : —He began to frequent the alehouse ; he sought out amusements ; there was a neighbouring fair where he first showed his quarrelsome disposition ; then came worse things ; and now here he is in prison. Yes, I should reply, he frequented, with a stealthy shame, those places which you, who would ignore all amusement, have suffered to be most coarse and demoralising. All along he had an exaggerated notion of the blame that he was justly liable to from his first steps in the downward path : the truth unfortunately is, that you go a long way to make a small error into a sin, when you miscall it so. I would not, therefore, have a clergyman talk of the alehouse as if it were the pit of Acheron. On the contrary, I would have him acknowledge that, considering the warmth and cheerfulness to be found in the sanded parlour of the village inn, it is very natural that men should be apt to frequent it. I would have him, however, go on to show, what frequenting the alehouse mostly leads to, and how the labourer's home might be made to rival the alehouse ; and I would have him help to make it so, or in some way, to provide some substitute for the alehouse.

The evils of competition are very considerable, and many people in these times hold up competition as the great monster evil of the age. I do not know how that may be ; but I am sure that the competition there is in the way of puritanical demonstration is very injurious to sincerity. This competition is the child of fear. A is afraid that his neighbour B will not think well of him,

because he (A) does or permits something which C, another neighbour, will not allow in his house. Surely this is little else than mere man-worship. It puts one in mind of the story of that congregation of the Church of England, who begged their clergyman to give them longer sermons—not that they were fond of long discourses—but that they might not always be out of church before some neighbouring congregation of Wesleyans or Independents.

Returning to the imaginary advocate for Puritanism who said that it secured more time for works of charity and for the love of God.

I do not know whether other people's observations will tally with mine ; but, as far as I have observed, it appears to me that charity requires the sternest labour and the most anxious thought ; that, in short, it is one of the most difficult things in the world, and is not altogether a matter for leisure hours. This remark applies to the more serious functions of charity. But we must remember that the whole of charity is not comprised in carrying about gifts to one another, or, to speak more generally, in remedying the material evils suffered by those around us, else life would indeed be a dreary affair ; but there are exquisite little charities to be performed in reference to social pleasures.

Then, as to the love of God, I do not venture to say much upon so solemn a theme ; but it does occur to me that we should talk and think very humbly about our capacity in matters so much above us. At any rate, I do not see why the love of God should withdraw us

largely from our fellow-man. That love we believe was greatest in Him who graced with His presence the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee ; who was never known to shun or ignore the existence of the vicious ; and to whom, more than to all other teachers, the hypocrite seems to have been particularly odious.

But there is another very important consideration to be weighed by those who are fearful of encouraging amusements, especially amongst their poorer brethren. What are the generality of people to do, or to think of, for a considerable portion of each day, if they are not allowed to busy themselves with some form of recreation ? Here is this infinite creature, man, who looks before and after, whose swiftness of thought is such, even among the dullest of the species, as would perhaps astonish the brightest, who are apt to imagine that none think but themselves ; and you fancy that he can be quite contented with providing warmth and food for himself and those he has to love and cherish. Food and warmth ! Content with that ! Not he : and we should greatly despise him if he could be. Why is it that in all ages small towns and remote villages have fostered little malignities of all kinds ? The true answer is, that people will backbite one another to any extent rather than not be amused. Nay, so strong is this desire for something to go on that may break the monotony of life, that people, not otherwise ill-natured, are pleased with the misfortune of their neighbours, solely because it gives something to think of,

something to talk about. They imagine how the principal actors and sufferers concerned in the misfortune will bear it ; what they will do ; how they will look ; and so the dull bystander forms a sort of drama for himself. He would, perhaps, be told, that it is wicked for him to go to such an entertainment ; he makes one out for himself not always innocently.

You hear clergymen in country parishes denouncing the ill-nature of their parishioners : it is in vain ; the better sort of men try to act up to what they are told, but really it is so dull in the parish that a bit of scandal is welcome to the heart. These poor people have nothing to think about ; nature shows them comparatively little, for art and science have not taught them to look behind the scenes, or even at the scenes ; literature they know nothing of ; they cannot have gossip about the men of the past (which is the most innocent kind of gossip), in other words, read and discuss history ; they have no delicate handiwork to amuse them ; in short, talk they must, and talk they will, about their neighbours, whose goings on are a perpetual puppet-show to them.

But, to speak more gravely, man, even the most sluggish-minded man, craves amusement of some kind ; and his wiser and more powerful brethren will show their wisdom, or their want of it, in the amusements they contrive for him.

We need not be afraid that in England any art or innocent amusement will be cultivated too much. The genius of the people, though kindly, is severe. And

that is why there is so much less danger of their being injured, if any one is, by recreation. Cyrus kept the Lydians tame, we are told, by allowing them to cultivate music ; the Greeks were perhaps prevented from becoming dominant by a cultivation of many arts ; but the Anglo-Saxons, like the Romans, can afford to cultivate art and recreations of all kinds. Such pursuits will not tame them too much. To contend, occasionally, against the bent of the genius, or the circumstances of a people, is one of the great arts of statesmanship. The same thing which is to be dreaded in one place is to be cultivated in another ; here a poison, there an antidote.

The above is what I thought in reference to Puritanism during my walk this evening : then, by a not uneasy diversion of mind, I turned to another branch of small persecutions—small do I call them ? perhaps they are the greatest that are endured, certainly the most vexatious. I mean all that is perpetuated by the tyranny of the weak.

This is a most fertile subject, and has been nearly neglected. Weak is a relative term : whenever two people meet, one is comparatively weak and the other strong ; the relation between them is often supposed to imply this. Taking society in general, there is a certain weakness of the kind I mean, attributable to the sick, the spoilt, the ill-tempered, the unfortunate, the aged, women, and the clergy. Now I venture to say, there is no observant man of the world, who has lived to the age of thirty, who has not seen numerous instances of severe

tyranny exercised by persons belonging to one or other of these classes ; ~~and~~ which tyranny has been established, continued, and endured, solely by reason of the weakness, real or supposed, of the persons exercising it. Talking once with a thoughtful man on this subject, he remarked to me, that, of course, the generous suffered much from the tyranny I was speaking of, as the strength of it was drawn from their strength. It might be compared to an evil government of a rich people, in which their riches furnished forth abundant armies wherewith to oppress the subject.

In quiet times this tyranny is very great. I have often thought whether it was not one very considerable compensation for rude hard times, or times of dire alarm, that domestic tyranny was then probably less severe : and among the various forms of domestic tyranny none occupies a more distinguished place than this of the tyranny of the weak over the strong.

If you come to analyse it, it is a tyranny exercised by playing upon the good-nature, the fear of responsibility, the dread of acting selfishly, the horror of giving pain, prevalent among good and kind people. They often know that it is a tremendous tyranny they are suffering under, and they do not feel it the less because they are consenting parties.

Meditating sometimes upon the results of this tyranny, I have thought to myself, what is to stop it ? In a state of further developed Christianity, unless, indeed, it were equally developed in all minds, there may be only more

room for this tyranny. And then this strange, but perhaps just idea came into my mind, that this tyranny would fall away in a state of clearer knowledge such as might accompany another state of being ; for then, the secrets of men's hearts not being profoundly concealed by silence, or by speech, it would be seen what the sufferers thought of these tyrannous proceedings ; and the tyrants would shrink back, abashed at the enormity of their requisitions, made visible in the clear mirror of another's mind.

A common form of this tyranny is where the tyrant uses a name of great potency, such as that of some relationship, and having performed few or none of the duties, exacts from the other side a most oppressive tribute—oppressive, even if the duties had been performed.

There is one reason for putting a limit to the suberviency of the strong to the weak, which reason, if fully developed, might do more at times to protect the strong from the weak than anything I know. Surely the most foolish strong person must occasionally have glimpses that he or she cannot sacrifice himself or herself alone : that, in dealing with another person, you are in some measure representing the outer world ; and ought (to use an official phrase) to govern yourself accordingly. We see this in managing children : and the most weakly indulgent people find that they must make a stop somewhere ; with some perception, it is to be hoped, that the world will not go on dealing with the children as they

(the indulgent persons) are doing ; and, therefore, that they are preparing mischief and discomfort on one side or the other for parties who are necessarily to be brought in contact.

The soft mud carried away by the encroaching sea cannot say—" I, the soft mud, am to be the only victim to this element ; and after I am gone it will no more encroach." No, it means to devour the whole land if it can.

Ah, thought I to myself, how important are such considerations as those I have had to-day, if we could but rightly direct them ; how much of the health and wealth of the world depend upon them ! Even in those periods when " laws or kings " could do predominant good or predominant ill, the miseries of private life perhaps outweighed the rest ; but now, as civilisation advances, the tendency is to some little amelioration of great political dangers ; while, at the same time, from more refinement, more intricacy of affairs, more nervous development, more pretence of goodness, more resolve to have everything quite neat and smooth and safe, the miseries which the generality of men make for themselves do not tend to decrease, unless kept down by a continual growth of wise and good thoughts and just habits of mind.

When we talk of

" The ills that laws or kings can cause or cure,"

our thoughts refer only to the functions of direct and open government ; but the laws which regulate the in-

tercourse of society, public opinion, and, in short, that almost impalpable code of thought and action which grows up in a very easy fashion between man and man, and is clothed with none of the ordinary dress of power, may yet be the subtlest and often the sternest despotism.

It is a strange fancy of mine, but I cannot help wishing we could "move for returns," as their phrase is in Parliament, of the suffering caused in any one day, or other period of time, throughout the world, to be arranged under certain heads; and we should then see what the world has occasion to fear most. What a large amount would come under the heads of unreasonable fear of others, of miserable quarrels amongst relations upon infinitesimally small subjects, of imaginary slights, of undue cares, of false shames, of absolute misunderstandings, of unnecessary pains to maintain credit or reputation, of vexation that we cannot make others of the same mind with ourselves. What a wonderful thing it would be to see set down in figures, as it were, how ingenious we are in plaguing one another. My own private opinion is, that the discomfort caused by injudicious dress, worn entirely in deference, as it has before been remarked, to the most foolish of mankind, in fact to the tyrannous majority, would outweigh many an evil that sounds very big.

Tested by these perfect returns, which I imagine might be made by the angelic world; if they regard human affairs, perhaps our every-day shaving, severe shirt-collars, and other ridiculous garments, are equiva-

lent to a great European war once in seven years ; and we should find that women's stays did about as much harm, *i.e.* caused as much suffering, as an occasional pestilence—say, for instance, the cholera. We should find perhaps that the vexations arising from the income-tax were nearly equal to those caused amongst the same class of sufferers by the ill-natured things men fancy have been said behind their backs : and perhaps the whole burden and vexation resulting from the aggregate of the respective national debts of that unthrifty family, the European race—the whole burden and vexation, I say, do not come up to the aggregate of annoyances inflicted in each locality by the one ill-natured person who generally infests each little village, parish, house, or community.

There is no knowing what strange comparisons and discoveries I should in my fancy have been led to—perhaps that the love, said to be inherent in the softer sex, of having the last word, causes as much mischief as all the tornadoes of the Tropics ; or that the vexation inflicted by servants on their masters by assuring them that such and such duties do not belong to their place, is equivalent to all the sufferings that have been caused by mad dogs since the world began. But my meditations were suddenly interrupted and put to flight by a noise, which, in describing afterwards in somewhat high-flown terms, I said caused a dismay like that which would have been felt if, neglectful of the proper periods in history, the Huns, the Vandals, and the Visigoths, in

fact the unruly population of the world, had combined together and rushed down upon some quiet, orderly cathedral town.

In short, the children of my neighbours returning from school had dashed into my field, their main desire being to behold an arranged heap of stones and brick-bats which, after being diligently informed of the fact several times by my son Leonard, I had learnt was a house he had lately built.

There is a sort of freemasonry among children ; for these knew at once that this heap of stones was a house, and danced round it with delight as a great work of art. Now, do you suppose, to come back to the original subject of my meditations to-day, that the grown-up child does not want amusement, when you see how greedy children are of it? Do not imagine we grow out of that : we disguise ourselves by various solemnities ; but we have none of us lost the child-nature yet.

I was glad to see how merry the children could be, though looking so blue and cold, and still more pleased to find that my presence did not scare them away, and that they have no grown-up feeling as yet about trespassing : I fled, however, from the noise into more quiet quarters, and broke up the train of reflections of which I now give these outlines, hoping they may be of use to some one.

CHAPTER IV.

MUCH retrospect is not a very safe or a very wise thing ; still there are times when a man may do well to look back upon his past life, and endeavour to take a comprehensive view of it. And whether such retrospect is wise or not, it cannot be avoided, as our reveries must sometimes turn upon that one life, our own, respecting which we have a great number of facts very interesting to us, and thoroughly within our ken. The process is curiously different from that pursued by Alnaschar in the "Arabian Nights," who with an imaginary spurn, alas, too well interpreted by a real gesture, disposed at once of all his splendid fortunes gained in reverie. In this progress of retrospection many find that the spurn is real as well as the fatal gesture which realised it, only both have been administered by the rude world instead of by themselves ; the fragments of their broken pottery lie around them ; and, going back to fond memories of the past, they have to reconstruct the original reverie—the dream of their youth—the proud purpose of their manhood—how fulfilled !

Walking up and down amidst the young fir-trees in the little plantation to the north-east of the garden, and, occasionally, with all the interest of a young planter,

stopping in front of a particular tree, and inspecting this year's growth, I got into such a train of retrospect as I have just spoken of : and from that, by a process which will be visible to the reader, was soon led into thoughts about the future.

I pictured to myself a descendant of mine, a man of dilapidated fortune, but still owning this house and garden. The few adjoining fields he will long ago have parted with. But he loves the place, having been brought up here by his sad, gentle mother, and having lived here with his young sister, then a rapturous imaginative girl, his companion and delight. Through the smallness of their fortune, and consequently the narrow circle of their acquaintances, she will have married a man totally unfit for her ; the romance of her nature has turned somewhat sour ; and, though occasionally high-minded, she is very peevish now, and is no longer the companion that she was to her brother. He just remembers his father pacing with disturbed step under these trees which I am now walking about. He recollects before his father's death, how eagerly the fond wife used to waylay and open large packets, which she would not always bring to the dying man's bed. He now knows them to have been law papers ; and when he thinks of these things, he utters harsh words about the iniquity of the law in England ; and says something about law growing in upon a fallen estate like fungus upon old and failing wood.

These things are now long past : they occurred in his childhood. His mother is dead, and lies in that quiet

churchyard in the wood, where, if I mistake not, one of his ancestors will also have found a peaceful resting-place. The house has fully partaken of the falling fortunes of its successive owners. The furniture is too old and worn for any new comer to be tempted to occupy the house ; and the little garden is let to a market-gardener. Strawberries will grow then on the turf where I am now walking, and which John, after mowing it twice in the week, and having spent all his time in its vicinity, from working-day morning till working-day night, comes to look at on a Sunday, and, with his hands in his pockets and himself arrayed in a waistcoat too bright almost to behold, surveys intently, as if it were one of the greatest products of human invention. And John need not be ashamed of this single-minded delight in his work, for, though it is nothing remarkable in England, the whole continent of Europe does not probably afford such a well-shaven bit of grass : and, as for our love of gardens, it is the last refuge of art in the minds and souls of many Englishmen : if we did not care for gardens, I hardly know what in the way of beauty we should care for. Well, this has all ceased by that time to be pleasure-garden, and I fear to think of the profane cabbages which will then occupy this trim velvety little spot. I hope that poor John, from some distant place, will not behold the profanation.

I have lingered on these details ; but I must now bring my distant descendant nearer to us. He will live in some large town, getting his bread in a humble way, and will sometimes steal down here, pretending to want

to know whether anybody has applied to take the tumble-down place. This is what he says to his wife (for, of course, being so poor, this foolish Milverton has married), but she understands him better than to be deceived by that.

He had just made one of these excursions, having, for economy's sake and a wish to avoid the neighbours, got out at a station ten miles off (our cathedral town), and walked over to his house. It is evening, and he has just arrived. Tired as he is, he takes a turn round the garden, and after a long-drawn sigh, which I know well the words for, he enters the house. The market-gardener lives in it, and his wife takes care of the master's rooms. She has lighted a fire : the smoke hardly ascends, but still there is warmth enough to call out much of the latent dampness of the apartment. The things about him are somewhat cheerless certainly, but he would not wish them to be otherwise. They would be very inharmonious if they were. During his meagre supper he is entertained with an account of the repairs that must be looked to. The water comes in here, and part of the wall has fallen down there ; and farmer Smith says (the coarse woman need not have repeated the very words) that if Mr Milverton is too poor to mend his own fence, he, farmer Smith, must do it himself. Patiently the poor man appears to attend to all this, but is thinking all the while of his pale mother, and of his wondering, as a child, why she never used to look up when horse or man went by, as she sat working at that bay window, and getting his clothes ready for school.

At last the market-gardener's wife, little attended to, bounces out of the room ; and her abrupt departure rouses my distant descendant to think of ways and means. And here I cannot help, as if I were present at the reverie, breaking in and saying, "Do not cut down that yew-tree in the back garden, the stately well-grown one which was an ancient tree in my time." But no, upon second thoughts, I will say nothing of the kind. "Cut it down, cut them all down, dear distant descendant, rather than let little tradesmen want their money, or do the least dishonourable thing."

Apparently the present question of ways and means is settled somehow, for he rises and paces about the room. In a corner there lies an aged Parliamentary report, a remnant from my old library, the bulk of which has long been sold. It is the report of a Select Committee upon the effect on prices of the influx of Californian gold. There are some side-notes which he takes to have been mine ; and this makes him think of me—not very kindly. These are his thoughts—This ancestor of mine, I see he busied himself about many worldly things ; it is not likely that, taking an interest in such affairs, he would not have cared to have some hand in managing them ; I conjecture that indeed, if only from one saying of his, that the bustle of life, if good for little else, at least keeps some sadness down at the bottom of the heart ; and yet I do not find that our estate prospered much under him. He might now, if he had been a prosperous gentleman, have

bought some part of Woodcot Chase (which was sold in his time and is now all building-ground), and I should not have been in this cursed plight.

“Distant descendant, do not let misfortune make you, as it so often does make men, ungenerous.”

He feels this and resumes. I wonder why he did not become rich and great. I suspect he was very laborious. (“You do me full justice there.”) I suppose he was very versatile, and did not keep to one thing at a time. (“You do me injustice there ; for I was always aware how much men must limit their efforts to effect anything.”) In his books he sometimes makes shrewd worldly remarks which show he understood something of the world, and he ought to have mastered it.

“Now, my dear young relative, allow me to say that last remark of yours upon character is a very weak one. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that what you urge in my favour be true, you must know that the people who write shrewdly are often the most easy to impose upon, or have been so. I almost suspect, without, however, having looked into the matter, that Rochefoucauld was a tender lover, a warm friend, and, in general, a dupe (happy for him) to all the impulses and affections which he would have us imagine he saw through and had mastered. The simple write shrewdly : but do not describe what they do. And the hard and worldly would be too wise in their generation to write about what they practise, even if they perceived it, which they seldom do, lacking delicacy of imagination.”

Perhaps (he continues) this ancestor of mine had no ambition, and did not care about anything but that unwholesome scribbling ("ungracious again, distant descendant!") which has brought us in but little produce of any kind.

Dear distant kinsman, now it is my turn to speak: now listen to me; and I will show you the family failing, not a very uncommon one, which has reduced us by degrees to this sad state; for we, your ancestors, look on and suffer with you.

I am afraid we must own that we were of that foolish class of men who never can say a hearty good word for themselves. You might put a Milverton in the most favourable position in the world, you might have made him a Bishop in George the Second's time, or a minister to a Spanish King in the seventeenth century, and still he would have contrived to shuffle awkwardly out of wealth and dignities, when the right time came for self-assertion, and for saying a stout word for his own cause, or for that of his kith and kin.

"*Vox faucibus hæsit;*" the poor, simple fellow was almost inaudible; and, muttering something, was supposed to say just that which he did not. I foresaw, therefore, that unless some Milverton were by good fortune to marry into a sturdy, pushing family (which would be better for him than any amount of present fortune), it was all over with the race, as far as worldly prosperity is concerned. And so it seems to be. If you feel that you are free from this defect, I will insure your fortune.

Talk of cutting down the yew-tree ; not a stick of the plantation need be touched, and I already see deep belts of new wood rise round newly-gained acres. Only be sure that you really can stand up stoutly for yourself.

I see what you are thinking of—that passage in Bacon (and it pleases me to find that you are so far well read, though you have sold the books) where he says that there are occasions when a man needs a friend to do or say for him what he never can do or say so well, or even at all, for himself. True : but, my simple-minded relative, have you lived to the age of twenty-seven, and not discovered that Phoenixes and Friends are creatures of the least prolific nature ? Not that, adopting your misanthropic mood, I would say that there are no such creatures as friends, and that they are not potent for good. A man's friend, however, is ill, or travelling, or powerless ; but good self-assurance is always within call.

You are mute : you feel then that you are guilty too. Be comforted ; perhaps there is some island of the blest where there will be no occasion for pushing. Once this happened to me, that a great fierce obdurate crowd were pushing up in long line towards a door which was to lead them to some good thing ; and I, not liking the crowd, stole out of it, having made up my mind to be last, and was leaning indolently against a closed-up side door : when, all of a sudden, this door opened, and I was the first to walk in, and saw arrive long after me the men who had been thrusting and struggling round me.

This does not often happen in the world, but I think there was a meaning in it.

But now no more about me. We have to think what is to be done in your case.

You labour under a retiring disposition, you are married, and you wish to retrieve the family fortunes. This is a full and frank statement of your case, and there is no doubt that it is a very bad one, requiring wise and energetic remedies. First, you must at once abandon all those pursuits which depend for success upon refined appreciation. You must seek to do something which many people demand. I cannot illustrate what I mean better than by telling you what I often tell my publisher, whenever he speaks of the slackness of trade. There is a confectioner's shop next door, which is thronged with people : I beg him (the publisher) to draw a moral from this, and to set up, himself, an eating-house. That would be appealing to the million in the right way. I tell him he could hire me and others of his " eminent hands " to cook instead of to write, and then, instead of living on our wits (slender diet indeed !), we ourselves should be able to buy books, and should become great patrons of literature. I did not tell him, because it is not wise to run down authors in the presence of publishers, what I may mention to you, that many of us would be much more wisely and wholesomely employed in cooking than in writing. But this is nothing to you. What I want you, dear distant kinsman, to perceive, is, that you must at once cultivate something which is in general demand.

Emigrate, if you like, and cultivate the ground. Cattle are always in some demand, if only for tallow. It is better to provide the fuel for the lamp than those productions which are said to smell most of it. I cannot enter into details with you ; because I do not foresee what will be the flourishing trades in your time. I can only give you general advice.

One of the great aids, or hindrances, to success in anything lies in the temperament of a man. I do not know yours ; but I venture to point out to you what is the best temperament, namely, a combination of the desponding and the resolute, or, as I had better express it, of the apprehensive and the resolute. Such is the temperament of great commanders. Secretly, they rely upon nothing and upon nobody. There is such a powerful element of failure in all human affairs, that a shrewd man is always saying to himself, What shall I do, if that which I count upon does not come out as I expect ? This foresight dwarfs and crushes all but men of great resolution.

Then be not over-choice in looking out for what may exactly suit you ; but rather be ready to adopt any opportunities that occur. Fortune does not stoop often to take any one up. Favourable opportunities will not happen precisely in the way that you have imagined. Nothing does. Do not be discouraged, therefore, by a present detriment in any course which may lead to something good. Time is so precious here.

Get, if you can, into one or other of the main grooves

of human affairs. It is all the difference of going by railway, and walking over a ploughed field, whether you adopt common courses, or set up one for yourself. You will see, if your times are anything like ours, very inferior persons highly placed in the army, in the church, in office, at the bar. They have somehow got upon the line, and have moved on well with very little original motive power of their own. Do not let this make you talk as if merit were utterly neglected in these or any professions: only that getting well into the groove will frequently do instead of any great excellence.

My sarcastic friend, Ellesmere, whom you will probably know by repute as a great Chief Justice or Lord Chancellor, says, with the utmost gravity, that no man with less than a thousand pounds a year (I wonder whether in your times you will think that a large or a small income) can afford to have private opinions upon certain important subjects. He admits that he has known it done upon eight hundred a year; but only by very prudent people with small families.

But the night is coming on, and I feel, my dear descendant, as if I should like to say something more solemn to you than these worldly maxims.

Whatever happens, do not be dissatisfied with your worldly fortunes, lest the speech be justly made to you which was once made to a repining person much given to talk of how great she and hers had been. "Yes, madam," was the crushing reply, "we all find our level at last."

Eternally that fable is true, of a choice being given to men on their entrance into life. Two majestic women stand before you ; one in rich vesture, superb, with what seems like a mural crown on her head and plenty in her hand, and something of triumph, I will not say of boldness, in her eye ; and she, the queen of this world, can give you many things. The other is beautiful, but not alluring, nor rich, nor powerful ; and there are traces of care and shame and sorrow in her face ; and (marvellous to say) her look is downcast and yet noble. She can give you nothing, but she can make you somebody. If you cannot bear to part from her sweet sublime countenance, which hardly veils with sorrow its infinity, follow her : follow her, I say, if you are really minded so to do ; but do not, while you are on this track, look back with ill-concealed envy on the glittering things which fall in the path of those who prefer to follow the rich dame, and to pick up the riches and honours which fall from her cornucopia.

This is in substance what a true artist said to me only the other day, impatient, as he told me, of the complaints of those who would pursue art, and yet would have fortune.

But, indeed, all moral writings teem with this remark in one form or other. You cannot have inconsistent advantages. Do not shun this maxim because it is commonplace. On the contrary, take the closest heed of what observant men, who would probably like to show originality, are yet constrained to repeat. Therein lies

the marrow of the wisdom of the world. Such things are wiser than proverbs, which are seldom true except for the occasion on which they are used, and are generally good to strengthen a resolve rather than to enlighten it.

These latter words of mine fall upon an inattentive ear ; for my distant descendant, who has been gradually becoming more composed during the progress of this moral essay, at last falls quite asleep. Perhaps the great triumph of all moral writings, including sermons, is that at least they have produced some sweet and innocent sleep.

Poor fellow ! I now see how careworn he seems, though not without some good looks, which he owes to his great-great-great-grandmother, of whom, as he lies there, he puts me much in mind. He ought to thank me for those good looks, and to admit that winning some beauty for the family is at least as valuable as that Woodcot Chase which he thinks I ought to have laid hold of. But our unfair descendants never think of anything in our favour : this gout and that asthma and those mortgages are all remembered against us ; we hear but little on the other side.

Sleep on, dear distant progeny of mine, and I will keep the night watches of your anxious thought.

CHAPTER V.

THESE companions of my solitude, my reveries, take many forms. Sometimes, the nebulous stuff out of which they are formed comes together with some method and set purpose, and may be compared to a heavy cloud—then they will do for an essay or moral discourse ; at other times, they are merely like those sportive disconnected forms of vapour which are streaked across the heavens, now like a feather, now like the outline of a camel, doubtless obeying some law and with some design, but such as mocks our observation ; at other times, again, they arrange themselves like those fleckered clouds, where all the heavens are regularly broken up in small divisions, lying evenly over each other with light between each. The result of this last-mentioned state of reverie is well brought out in conversation : and so I am going to give the reader an account of some talk which I had lately with my friend Ellesmere.

Once or twice before I have used this name Ellesmere, as if it were familiar to others as to myself. It is to be found in a book edited, as it appears, by a neighbouring clergyman, named Dunsford, who was obliging and laborious enough to set down some conversations in which he, Ellesmere, and myself took part ; and which he called

"Friends in Council." There is no occasion to refer to this book to understand Ellesmere: a man soon shows himself by his talk, if he does by anything. Moreover, the average reader will find the book a somewhat sober, not to say dull affair, embracing such questions as slavery, government, management of the poor, and such like. The reader, however, who is not the average reader, may perhaps find something worth agreeing with, or differing from, in the book.

I flatter myself that last sentence is very skilful. The poor publisher, or rather his head man, complains sadly that not even the usual amount of advertisement, not to speak of puffing, is allowed to him; the good clergyman having a peculiar aversion to such modes of dealing, and believing that good books, if there were such things, should be sought after, and not poked in the faces of purchasers like Jews' penknives at coach doors. By this delicate piece of flattery, for each reader will secretly conclude that he is above the average and hasten to buy the book, I shall have done more than many puffs direct. Therefore be at ease, man of business, the avenues to thy shop will be thronged. I can utter this prophecy with the more confidence as the shop in question is in the high road to the Great Exhibition.

Well, my friend Ellesmere was with me for a day; we were lounging about the garden; the great black dog which I always let loose when Ellesmere is here, to please him, was slowly following us to and fro, hanging out his large tongue, and wishing we would sit down, but still

not being able to resist following us about ; when Ellesmere suddenly interrupted something I was saying with these words, " The question between us almost comes to this : you want a sheep-dog. I am satisfied with a watch-dog—Rollo will do for me ; and, as you see, he is content with my approbation."

This abrupt speech requires some explanation. I had been talking about some matters connected with statesmanship, and stricturing, perhaps too severely, some recent acts of government, in which, as I said, I detected some of the worst habits of modern policy—a mixture of rashness and indecision—meddling and doing nothing—spending, as I added, most of the powder for the flash in the pan. Then I went on to deplore, that always statesmanship appeared to come upon the stage too late. Is nothing ever to be done in time ?¹

A good deal of what I said is true, I think, but ought to be taken "cum grano," as they say ; for men who have lived a good deal in active life, and are withdrawn from it, are apt to comment too severely on the conduct of those who are left behind. They forget the difficulty of getting anything done in this perplexed world, and their own former difficulties in that way are softened by distance. It was well that Ellesmere interrupted me. The conversation thus proceeded.

Milverton. Yes, that is the point. I confess I should like something of the sheep-dog in a ruler. I think we,

¹ Written in 1850.

of all nations, can bear judicious interference and regulation ; we should not be cramped by it.

Ellesmere. In a representative government is the folly of the governed to find no place ?

Milverton. Yes, but, my good friend, you need not be anxious to provide for that. Folly will find a place even at the side of princes. That was the thing symbolised by great men's jesters. But, putting sarcasm aside, Ellesmere, I don't mean to blame present men so much as present doctrines and systems. Some of the men in power, or likely to be, in this country, are very honest, capable, brave men, full of desire to do good. But they have too little power, or rather, they meet with too much obstruction. Now, it is not wise to swathe a creature up like a foreign baby, and then say, Exert yourself, govern us, let there be no delay.

Ellesmere. The amount of obstruction is over-estimated. If a ruling man wanted to do anything good, I think he could do it, though I do admit that there are large powers of obstruction to be encountered.

Milverton. I do believe you are right. A statesman might venture to be greater and bolder than his position or apparent power quite warrants, And if he were to fall, he would fall—and there an end.

Ellesmere. And no such great damage either.

Milverton. But to return to your watch-dog and sheep-dog. There are two things very different demanded from statesmen : one, carrying on the routine of office ; the other originating measures, setting the limits within which

private exertion should act. You do not mean to contend, Ellesmere, that it would not have been wise for a government to have interfered with railway legislation earlier and more efficiently than it did.

Ellesmere. No—few people know better than I do the immense loss of time, money, labour, temper, and happiness which might have been saved in that matter.

Milverton. Now look again on Sanitary measures. Consider the years it has taken, and, for aught I know, may yet take, to get a Smoke Prohibition Bill passed. If such a thing is wise and possible, let us have it; if not, tell us it cannot be done. I have taken instances in physical things just as they occurred to me: I might have alluded to higher matters which are left in the same way, to see what will happen, to wait for the breezes, perhaps the storms, of popular agitation.

Ellesmere. People in authority are as fearful of attacking any social evil as men are of cutting down old trees about their houses. There is always something, however, to be said for the old trees.

Milverton. It would mostly be better, though, to cut them down at once, and begin to plant something at the proper distance from their houses.

Ellesmere. Well, Milverton, there is one thing you must remember, and that is, that intelligent men writing or talking about government are apt to fancy themselves, or such men as themselves, in power; and so are inclined to be very liberal in assigning the limits of that power. Let them fancy some of the foolish people they know in

this imaginary position of great power ; and then see how the intelligent men begin to shudder at the thought of this power, and to desire very secure limits for it, and very narrow space for its exercise.

Milverton. Intelligent public opinion will in these days prevent vigorous action in a minister from hardening into despotism.

Ellesmere. Please repeat that again, my friend. "Intelligent public opinion?" Were those the words? did I catch them rightly?

Milverton. You did. There is such a thing, Ellesmere. It is not the first opinion heard in the country ; it is not always loud on the hustings ; but surely there are a great number of persons in a country like this, who try to think, and eventually form intelligent public opinion.

Ellesmere. I am afraid they are not a very active body.

Milverton. Not the most active ; but they come in at some time.

Ellesmere. I do not wish to be impertinent, but do any of these people who ultimately (ultimately, I like that word) form intelligent public opinion, live in the country? I can imagine a retired wisdom in some Court in London, say Pump Court for instance, but I cannot fancy the blowsy wisdom of the country.

Milverton. Now, Ellesmere, do not be provoking.

Ellesmere. I am all gravity again : but just allow me to propound one little theory, namely, that it is when the retired wisdom of town is revived by country air

(on a visit) that it is apt to develop itself into—what is it?—oh—“intelligent public opinion.”

Milverton. Now, as you have had your joke, I will proceed. I have a theory that the temperament and habits of mind of individual statesmen have a good deal to do with government. I do not yet believe that we are all compounded into some great machine of which you can exactly calculate the results.

Ellesmere. Which is your pet temperament for a statesman?

Milverton. That is a large question: one thing I should be inclined to say, with respect to his habit of mind—he should doubt till the last, and then act like a man who has never doubted.

Ellesmere. Cleverly put, but untrue, after the fashion of you maxim-mongers. He should not act like a man who has never doubted, but like a man who was in the habit of doubting till he had received sufficient information. He should not convey to you the idea of a man who was given to doubt, or not to doubt; but of one who could wait till he had inquired.

Milverton. Your criticism is just. Well, then, another thing which occurs to me respecting his habits of mind is, that he should be one of those people who are not given to any system, and yet who have an exceeding love of improvement and disposition to regulate.

Ellesmere. That is good. I distrust systems. I find that men talk of principles; and mean, when you come to inquire, rules connected with certain systems.

Milverton. This enables me to bring my notions of government interference to a point. It should be a principle in a statesman's mind that he should not interfere so as to deaden private action : at the same time he should be profoundly anxious that right and good should be done, and consequently not fear to undertake responsibility. He should not be entrapped, mentally, into any system of policy which held him to interfere here, or not to interfere there ; but he should be inclined to look at each case on its own merits. This is very hard work. Systems save trouble—the trouble of thinking.

Ellesmere. There is some sense in what you say. If we talk no more about statesmanship (and to tell the truth, I am rather tired of the subject), our dialogue will end like the dialogues in a book, where, after much sham stage-fighting, the author's opinion is always made to prevail. By the way, I daresay you think that the nursery for Statesmen is Literature ; and that in these days of railways, a short line from Grub Street to Downing Street (a single set of rails, as no one will want to return) is imperatively needed.

Milverton. No, I do not. I think that good Literature, like any other good work, gives notice of material out of which a statesman might choose. To make a good book, my dear friend, is a very hard thing, I suspect. I do not mean a work of genius. Of course such are very rare. But to give an account of any transaction ; to put forward any connected views ; in short, to

do any mere literary work well ; it requires many of the things which tend to make a good man of business—industry, for instance, method, clearness, resolve, power of adaptation.

Ellesmere. Yes, no doubt : foreign nations seem to have profited so much from calling literary men to their aid, that——

Milverton. That is an unjust sneer, Ellesmere. Some of the writings of the men to whom I know you allude, do not fulfil the condition of being good books ; are full of false antitheses, illogical conclusions, vapid assertions, and words arranged according to prettiness, not to meaning. Such books are beacons ; they tell all men, The people who wrote us are sprightly fellows, but cannot be trusted ; they love sound more than sense, pray do not trust them with any function requiring sense rather than sound.

But you are not to conclude because some men make use of Literature, perhaps the only way open to them of carrying their views into action, that they could not act themselves. Napoleon was always writing early in life ; Cæsar indited books, even a grammar ; a whole host of captains and statesmen in the sixteenth century were writers. Follow Cervantes, Mendoza, Sidney, Camoens, Descartes, Paul Louis Courier, to the field, and come back with them—if you ever do come back alive, you individual clothed with horsehair and audacity ; and then follow them to their studies, and see whether they cannot give a good account of themselves in both departments.

Ellesmere. Pistol is come back again on earth, or Bombastes Furioso, neither of whose characters sits well upon you. But, my friend, we are wont in law to look to the point at issue ; we were talking of statesmen, not of soldiers.

Milverton. Machiavelli——

Ellesmere. That worthy man !

Milverton. Cæsar again ! Lorenzo de' Medici, James the First of Scotland, Milton, Bacon, Grotius, Shaftesbury, Somers, St. John, Temple, Burke. And were I to rack my brains, or my books, I could no doubt make an ample list.

Ellesmere. Good, bad, and indifferent : here they come, altogether.

Milverton. And have there been no bad statesmen amongst those who had no tincture of letters ?

Ellesmere. One or two, certainly.

Milverton. You know, Ellesmere, I have never talked loudly of the claims of literary men, and have always maintained that for them, especially when they are of real merit, to complain of neglect is for the most part absurd. A great writer, as I think Mr. Carlyle has well said, creates a want for himself—a most artificial one. Nobody wanted him before he appeared. He has to show them what they want him for. You might as well talk of Leverrier's planet having been neglected in George the Second's time. It had not been discovered : that is all.

There may be misunderstandings as to the nature of literary merit, as indeed of all merit, which may prevent

worldly men from making due use of it in worldly affairs. For instance, I should say that diplomatic services are services peculiarly fit to be performed by literary men. They are likely to be more of cosmopolites than other men are. Their various accomplishments serve them as means of attaching others in strange countries. Their observations are likely to be good. One can easily see that a great deal of their habitual work would come into play in such employments. And there is an appearance of hardship in not giving, at least occasionally, to men who are particularly shut out from most worldly advantages, those offices which they promise to be most fitted for.

Ellesmere. It would improve many a literary man greatly to have, or to have had, some real business.

Milverton. No doubt. Indeed, I have always thought it is a melancholy thing to see how shut up, or rather I should say, how twisted and deformed a man becomes by surrendering himself to any one art, science, calling, or culture. You see a person become a lawyer, a physician, a clergyman, an author, or an artist; and cease to be a man, a wholesome man, fairly developed in all ways. Each man's art or function, however serviceable, should be attached to him no more than to a soldier his sword, which the accomplished military man can lay aside, and not even remind you that he has ever worn such a thing.

Ellesmere. An idea strikes me; I see how literary men may be rewarded, literature soundly encouraged, and yet

the author be injured the least possible by his craft. Hitherto we have given pensions for what a man has written. I would do this: I would ascertain when a man has acquired that lamentable facility for doing second-rate things which is not uncommon in literature as in other branches of life, and then I would say to him, I see you can write, here is a hundred a year for you as long as you are quite quiet. Indeed, I think pensions and honours should generally be given to the persons who could have done the things for which such rewards are given, but who have not done them. I would say to this man, You have great parliamentary influence, you did not use it for mere party purposes; there is a peerage for you. You, turning to another man, might have become a great lawyer, or rather a lawyer in great place: you had too much——

Milverton. Modesty——

Ellesmere. Pooh, nonsense! modesty never did anybody any harm. No, let me go on with my speech. You had too much honesty, or scrupulousness, to escape being thrown out for the borough of —— which (as a lawyer to get on in the highest offices must please a constituency as well as understand his business) was fatal to you. Here, however, is a baronetcy for you.

Here, you, Mr. Milverton, you might have written two books a year (dreadful thought!), you have not always inflicted one upon us. Be Guelphed, and consider yourself well off. Keep yourself quiet for several years, and we may advance you further.

Oh ! what a patron of arts and letters is lost in me ! Now this dog can bark and make a horrible noise to distinguish himself ; he does not do it—that is why I like you so much, my dear Rollo (at that instant, unluckily, Rollo, taking heed of Ellesmere's comical gestures, and seeing that something was addressed to him, began to frisk about and bark). Oh, dear me ! I see one can't praise or encourage any creature without doing mischief.

Milverton. You have not to reproach yourself for having done much in this way.

Ellesmere. Too much—sadly too much. But here comes John with a solicitous face, to get your orders about planting the trees which came last night, and which ought to have been put in early this morning. Attend to them : they are your great works ; some of them may live to a remote posterity : and while you are about it, my good fellow, do put in something which will produce eatables. Those fir-cones are very pretty things, but hard to eat. Remember that a certain learned gentleman who hopes to live to a good old age, is very fond of mulberries ; and if some trees were put in now, he might have something good to eat when he comes into the country, and be able to refresh himself after delivering judicious opinions on all subjects.

So we separated—I to my trees, and Ellesmere to take the dog out for a walk.

CHAPTER VI.

I RESOLVED to-day to go out into the neighbouring pine-wood alone, to con over some notes which I am anxious to read by myself, with only an occasional remark from a wood-pigeon, or what may be gained from the gliding, rustling squirrel. There is scarcely anything in nature to be compared with a pine-wood, I think. I remember once when, after a long journey, I was approaching a city ennobled by great works of art, and of great renown, that I had to pass through what I was told by the guide-books was most insipid country, only to be hurried over as fast as might be, and nothing to be thought or said about it. But the guide-books, though very clever and useful things in their way, do not know each of us personally, nor what we secretly like and care for. Well, I was speeding through this "uninteresting" country, and now there remained but one long dull stage, as I read, to be gone through before I should reach the much-wished-for city. It was necessary to stay some time (for we travelled vetturino fashion) at the little post-house, and I walked on, promising to be in the way whenever the vehicle should overtake me. The road led through a wood, chiefly of pines, varied, however, occasionally by other trees.

Into this wood I strayed. There was that almost indescribably soothing noise (the Romans would have used the word "susurrus"), the aggregate of many gentle movements of gentle creatures. The birds hopped but a few paces off, as I approached them; the brilliant butterflies wavered hither and thither before me; there was a soft breeze that day, and the tops of the tall trees swayed to and fro politely to each other. I found many delightful resting-places. It was not all dense wood; but here and there were glades (such open spots, I mean, as would be cut through by the sword for an army to pass); and here and there stood a clump of trees of different heights and foliage, as beautifully arranged as if some triumph of the art of landscape had been intended, though it was only Nature's way of healing up the gaps in the forest. For her healing is a new beauty.

It was very warm, without which nothing is beautiful to me; and I fell into the pleasantest train of thought. The easiness of that present moment seemed to show the possibility of all care being driven away from the world some day. For thus peace brings a sensation of power with it. I shall not say what I thought of, for it is not good always to be communicative; but altogether that hour in the pine-wood was the happiest hour of the whole journey, though I saw many grand pictures and noble statues, a mighty river and buildings which were built when people had their own clear thoughts of what they meant to do, and how they would do it. But in seeing these things there is, so to speak, something that

is official, that must be done in a set way ; and, after all, it is the chance felicities in minor things which are so pleasant in a journey. You had intended, for instance, to go and hear some great service, and there was something to be done, and a crowd to be encountered ; and you open your window and find, as the warm air streams in, that beautiful sounds come with it ; in truth, your window is not far off from an opening in one of the cathedral windows, and there you stay drinking in all the music, being alone. You feel that a bit of good fortune has happened to you ; and you are happier all the day for it.

It is the same thing in the journey of life ; pleasure falls into no plan.

I think I have justified my liking for a pine-wood ; and though the particular wood I can get at here is but a poor thing as compared with the great forests I have been thinking of, yet, looked at with all the reminiscence of their beauties, its few and mean particulars are so wrought upon by memory and fancy, that it brings before me a sufficient picture, half seen, half recollected, of all that is most beautiful in sylvan scenery.

To my wood then I wandered ; and, after pacing up and down a little, and enjoying the rich colour of the trunks of the trees, I sat down upon a tree that had been lately felled, and read out my notes to myself. Here they are. They begin, I see, with a little narration ; which, however, is not a bad beginning.

It was a bright winter's day ; and I sat upon a garden-seat in a sheltered nook towards the south, having come out of my study to enjoy the warmth, like a fly that has left some snug crevice to stretch his legs upon the unwontedly sunny pane in December. My little daughter (she is a very little thing about four years old) came running up to me, and when she had arrived at my knees, held up a straggling but pretty weed. Then, with great earnestness, and as if fresh from some controversy on the subject, she exclaimed, "Is this a weed, Papa ; is this a weed?"

"Yes, a weed," I replied.

With a look of disappointment she moved off to the one she loved best amongst us ; and, asking the same question, received the same answer.

"But it has flowers," the child replied.

"That does not signify ; it is a weed," was the inexorable answer.

Presently, after a moment's consideration, the child ran off again, and meeting the gardener just near my nook, though out of sight from where I sat, she coaxingly addressed him.

"Nicholas dear, is this a weed?"

"Yes, miss ; they call it 'Shepherd's purse.'"

A pause ensued : I thought the child was now fairly silenced by authority, when all at once the little voice began again, "Will you plant it in my garden, Nicholas dear? do plant it in my garden."

There was no resisting the anxious entreaty of the

child ; and man and child moved off together to plant the weed in one of those plots of ground which the children walk about upon a good deal, and put branches of trees in and grown-up flowers, and then examine the roots (a system as encouraging as other systems of education I could name), and which they call their gardens.

But the child's words, "Will you plant it in my garden?" remained upon my mind. That is what I have always been thinking, I exclaimed : and it is what I will begin by saying.

And, indeed, dear reader, if I were to tell you how long I have been thinking of the subject which I mean to preface by the child's fond words ; and how hopeless it has at times appeared to me to say anything worth hearing about it ; and how I have still clung to my resolve, and worked on at other things with a view of coming eventually to this, you would sympathise with me already, as we do with any man who keeps a task long in mind and heart, though he execute it at last but poorly, and though it be but a poor task, such as a fortune for himself, or a tomb for his remains. For we like to see a man persevere in anything.

Without more preface, then, I will say at once that this subject is one which I have been wont to call "the great sin of great cities"—not that in so calling it I have perhaps been strictly just, but the description will do well enough. For what is the thing which must so often diminish the pride of man when contemplating the splen-

did monuments of a great city, its shops, its public buildings, parks, equipages, and above all, the wonderful way in which vast crowds of people go about their affairs with so little outward contest and confusion? I imagine the beholder in the best parts of the town, not diving into narrow streets, wandering sickened and exhausted near uncovered ditches in squalid suburbs, or studiously looking behind the brilliant surface of things. But what is it which on that very surface, helping to form a part of the brilliancy (like the prismatic colours seen on stagnant film), conveys at times to any thoughtful mind an impression of the deepest mournfulness, a perception of the dark blots upon human civilisation,—in a word, some appreciation of the great sin of great cities? The vile sewer, the offensive factory chimney, the squalid suburb, tell their own tale very clearly. The girl with hardened look, and false imprinted smile, tells one no less ominous of evil.

In fact I do not know any one thing which concentrates and reflects more accurately the evils of any society than this sin. It is a measure of the want of employment, the uncertainty of employment, the moral corruption amongst the higher classes, the want of education amongst the lower, the relaxation of bonds between master and servant, employer and employed; and, indeed, it expresses the want of prudence, truth, light, and love in that community.

In considering any evil, our thoughts may be classed

under three heads—the nature of it, the causes of it, the remedies for it. Often the discussion of any one of these great branches of the subject involves the other two; and it becomes difficult to divide them without pedantry. But in general, we may, for convenience, attend to such a division of the subject.

I. THE NATURE.

The nature of the evil in this case is one which does not require to be largely dwelt upon; and yet several things must be said about it. One which occurs to me is the degradation of race. Thousands upon thousands of beautiful women are by it condemned to sterility. As a nation, we should look with exceeding jealousy and alarm at any occupation which claimed our tallest men and left them without offspring. And, surely, it is no light matter, in a national point of view, that any sin should claim the right of consuming, sometimes as rapidly as if they were a slave population, a considerable number of the best-looking persons in the community.

How slight, however, is the physical degradation compared with the mental degradation caused by this sin: and here I do not mean only the dishonour of the individuals, but the large social injury which the mere existence of such a thing causes. For it accustoms men to the contemplation of the greatest social failures, and introduces habitually a low view of the highest things. We are apt to look at each individual case too harshly;

but the whole thing is not looked at gravely enough. This often happens in considering any great social abuse; and so we frequently commence the remedy by some great injustice in a particular case.

In appreciating the nature of this evil, the feelings of the people concerned with it are a large part of the subject. On the one side are shame, pride, dejection, restlessness, hopelessness, and a sense of ill-usage, resulting in a bitter effrontery, a mean heartlessness, and a godless remorse. As a mere matter of statesmanship such a class requires to be looked to as pre-eminently dangerous. On the other side is often the meanness without the shame; and a permanent coarseness and unholiness of mind is inflicted upon the sex that most requires refinement and spirituality in the affections.

To return, however, to a consideration of the feelings of the poor women; it may be noticed that they have an excessive fear of being left alone with their own recollections, which is no doubt a great obstacle to their being reclaimed. Withal there is something very grand, though sad, that one of the main obstacles to outward improvement lies in the intensity of shame for the wrongdoing, in a dumb but profound remorse. You may see similar feelings operating very variously among the greatest men whose spiritual state is at all known to us. Poor Luther exclaims, "When I am assailed with heavy tribulations, I rush out among my pigs, rather than remain alone by myself. The human heart is like a

millstone in a mill: when you put wheat under it, it turns and grinds and bruises the wheat to flour; if you put no wheat, it still grinds on, but then it is itself it grinds and wears away."

Certainly the Gospel seems especially given to meet these cases of remorse, and to prevent despair (not the tempter but the slave-driver to so many crimes) from having an unjust and irreligious hold, not so much on men's fears as on their fancies—especially their notions of perfection as regards themselves. For I doubt not but that men and women much lower down in the scale of cultivation and sensibility than we imagine, are haunted by a sense of their own fall from what they feel and think they ought to have been.

II. THE CAUSES.

The main cause of this sin on the woman's part is want—absolute want. This, though one of the most grievous things to contemplate, has at the same time a large admixture of hope in it. For, surely, if civilisation is to make any sufficient answer for itself and for the many serious evils it promotes, it ought to be that it renders the vicissitudes of life less extreme, that it provides a resource for all of us against excessive want. Hitherto we have not succeeded in making it do so, but it is contended, and with apparent justice, that it acts better in this respect than savage life. At any rate, to return to the main course of my argument, it is more

satisfactory to hear that this evil is a result, on one side at least, of want rather than of depravity.

The next great cause is in the over-rigid views and opinions, especially as against women, expressed in reference to unchastity. Christianity has been in some measure to blame for this ; though, if rightly applied, it would have been the surest cure. "Publicans and sinners !" Such did He prefer before the company of Pharisees and hypocrites. These latter, however, have been in great credit ever since ; and, for my part, I see no end to their being pronounced for ever the choice society of the world.

The virtuous, carefully tended and carefully brought up, ought to bethink themselves how little they may owe to their own merit that they are virtuous, for it is in the evil concurrence of bad disposition and masterless opportunity that crime comes. Of course, to an evil-disposed mind, opportunity will never be wanting ; but when one person or class of persons is from circumstances peculiarly exposed to temptation, and goes wrong, it is no great stretch of charity for others to conclude that that person, or class, did not begin with worse dispositions than they themselves who are still without a stain. This is very obvious ; but it is to be observed that the reasoning powers which are very prompt in mastering any simple scientific proposition, experience a wonderful halting in their logic when applied to the furtherance of charity.

There is a very homely proverb about the fate of the pitcher that goes often to the water, which might be an

aid to charity, and which bears closely on the present case. The Spaniards, from whom I daresay we have the proverb, express it prettily and pithily :—

“Cantarillo que muchas vezes va a la fuente,
O dexa la asa, o la frente.”

“The little pitcher that goes often to the fountain, either leaves the handle or the spout behind some day.”

The dainty vase which is kept under a glass case in a drawing-room should not be too proud of remaining without a flaw, considering its great advantages.

In the New Testament we have such matters treated in a truly Divine manner. There is no palliation of crime. Sometimes our charity is so mixed up with a mash of sentiment and sickly feeling that we do not know where we are, and what is vice, and what is virtue. But here are the brief stern words, “Go, and sin no more;” but, at the same time, there is an infinite consideration for the criminal, not however as criminal, but as human being: I mean, not in respect of her criminality, but of her humanity.

Now, an instance of our want of obedience to these Christian precepts has often struck me in the not visiting married women whose previous lives will not bear inspection. Whose will? Not merely all Christian people, but all civilised people, ought to set their faces against this excessive retrospection.

But if ever there were an occasion on which men (I say men, but I mean more especially women) should be careful of scattering abroad unjust and severe sayings, it

is in speaking of the frailties and delinquencies of women. For it is one of those things where an unjust judgment, or the fear of one, breaks down the bridge behind the repentant ; and has often made an error into a crime, and a single crime into a life of crime.

A daughter has left her home, madly, ever so wickedly, if you like ; but what are too often the demons tempting her onwards and preventing her return ? The uncharitable speeches she has heard at home ; and the feeling she shares with most of us, that those we have lived with are the sharpest judges of our conduct.

"Would you, then," exclaims some reader or hearer, "take back and receive with tenderness a daughter who had erred?" "Yes," I reply, "if she had been the most abandoned woman upon earth."

A foolish family pride often adds to this uncharitable way of feeling and speaking which I venture to reprehend. Our care is not that an evil and an unfortunate thing has happened, but that our family has been disgraced, as we call it. Family vanity mixes up with and exasperates rigid virtue. Good heavens ! if we could but see where disgrace really lies, how often men would be ashamed of their riches and their honours ; and would discern that a bad temper, or an irritable disposition, was the greatest family disgrace that attached to them.

A fear of the uncharitable speeches of others is the incentive in many courses of evil ; but it has a peculiar effect in the one we are considering, as it occurs with most force just at the most critical period—when the

victim of seduction is upon the point of falling into worse ways. Then it is that the uncharitable speeches she has heard on this subject in former days are so many goads to her, urging her along the downward path of evil. What a strange desperate notion it is of men, when they have erred, that things are at the worst, that nothing can be done to rescue them; whereas Judas might have done something better than hang himself.

But if we were all so kind, exclaims some rigid man, we should only encourage the evil we wish to subdue. He does not see that the first step in evil, and the abandonment to it as a course of life, proceed mostly from totally different motives, and are totally different things. One who dwelt on a secure height of peace and virtue, has fallen sadly and come down upon a table-land plagued with storms and liable to attacks of all kinds, and from which there is no ascent to the height again, but which is still at an immense distance above a certain abyss; and we should be very cautious of doing anything that might make the foolish, dejected, pride-led person plunge hopelessly down into the abyss, in all probability to be lost for ever.

Before quitting the subject of the family, I must observe that, independently of any harshness of remark which a young person may have been accustomed to hear on matters connected with our present subject, the ill-management of parents must be taken into account as one of the most common causes of this sin. It is very sad to be obliged to say this, but the thing is true, and

must be said. We must not, however, be too much discouraged at this, for the truth is, that to perform well any one of the great relations of life is an immense difficulty; and when we see on a tombstone (those underneath can now say nothing to the contrary) that the defunct was a good husband, father, and son, we may conclude, if the words were truthful, that we are passing by the mortal remains of an Admirable Crichton in morality. And these relations are the more difficult, as they are not to be completely fulfilled by an abnegation of self—in other words, by a weak giving way upon all points; which is the ruin of many a person. I am not, however, going, in this particular case, to speak of the spoiling of children in the ordinary sense, but rather of the contrary defect; which, strange to say, is quite as common, if not more so. Of necessity the ages of parents and children are separated by a considerable interval; the particular relation is one full of awe and authority; and the effect of that disparity of years, and of that natural awe and authority, may easily, by harsh or ungenial parents, be strained too far; other persons, and the world in general (not caring for the welfare of those who are no children of theirs, and besides using the just courtesy towards strangers), are often tolerant when parents are not so, which puts them to a great disadvantage; small matters are often needlessly made subjects of daily comment and blame; and, in the end, it comes that home is sometimes anything but the happy place we choose to make it out in songs and fiction of various

kinds. This, when it occurs, is a great pity. I am for making home very happy to children if it can be managed ; which, of course, is not to be done by weak compliances, and having no fixed rules. For no creature is happy, or even free, as Goethe has pointed out, except in the circuit of law. But laws and regulations having once been laid down, all within those bounds should be very kind at home. Now listen to the captious querulous scoldings that you may hear, even as you go along the streets, addressed by parents to children ; is it not manifest that in after-life there will be too much fear in the children's minds, and a belief that their father and mother never will sympathise with them as others even might—never will forgive them ? People of all classes, high and low, err in the same way ; and, in looking about the world, I have sometimes thought that a thoroughly judicious father is one of the rarest creatures to be met with.

Another cause of the frailty of women in the lower classes is in the comparative inelegance and uncleanness of the men in their own class. It also arises from the fondness which all women have for merit, or what they suppose to be such, so that their love is apt to follow what is in any way distinguished : and this throws the women of any class cruelly open to the seductions of the men in the class above. For women are the real aristocrats ; and it is one of their greatest merits. Men's intellects, even some of the brightest, may occasionally

be deceived by theories about equality and the like ; but women, who look at reality more, are rarely led away by nonsense of this kind.

A cause of this sin of a very different kind, and applying to men, is a dreadful notion which has occasionally been adopted in these latter ages, namely, that it is a fine thing for a man to have gone through a great deal of vice—to have had much personal experience of wickedness ; in short, that knowledge of vice is knowledge of the world, and that such knowledge of the world is eminently useful. That is not the way in which the greatest thinkers read the world ; they tell us that

“The Gods approve the depth and not the tumult of the soul.”

Self-restraint is the grand thing, is the great tutor.

But let us not talk insincerely even for a good end, as we may suppose ; and therefore do not let us deny that every evil carries with it its teachings. An indulgence in dissipation teaches that dissipation is a fatal thing : and the man who learns that, very often does not learn anything more. But the excellence of particular men must greatly consist in their appreciating truths without having to pay the full experience for them ; so that in those respects they have a great start of other men. However, whether these theories of mine be true or not, there can be no doubt, I think, that indulgence of any kind is a thing which requires no theory to support it ; and I do not think it will be found that the men of consummate knowledge of the world have gained that knowledge by

vice ; but rather, as all other knowledge is gained, by toil and truth and love and self-restraint. And these four things do not abide with vice.

Probably, too, a low view of humanity which vice gives, is in itself the greatest barrier to the highest knowledge.

One great source of the sin we are considering is the want of other thoughts. Here Puritanism comes in, as it has any time these two hundred years, to darken and deepen every mischief. The lower orders here are left with so little to think of but labour and vice. Now, any grand thought, great poetry, or noble song, is adverse to any abuse of the passions—even that which seems most concerned with the passions. For all that is great in idea, that insists upon men's attention, does so by an appeal, expressed or implied, to the infinite within him and around him. A man coming from a great representation of Macbeth is not in the humour for a low intrigue : and, in general, vice, especially of the kind we are considering, seizes hold not of the passionate so much as of the cold and vacant mind.

On this account education and cultivation are to be looked to as potent remedies. The pleasures of the poor will be found to be moral safeguards rather than dangers. I smile sometimes when I think of the preacher in some remote country place imploring his hearers not to give way to backbiting, not to indulge in low sensuality, and not to busy themselves with other people's affairs. Meanwhile, what are they to do if they do not concern themselves with such things? The heavy ploughboy who

lounges along in that listless manner has a mind which moves with a rapidity that bears no relation to that outward heaviness of his. That mind will be fed ; will consume all about it, like oxygen, if new thoughts and aspirations are not given it. The true strategy in attacking any vice, is by putting in a virtue to counteract it ; in attacking any evil thought, by putting in a good thought to meet it. Thus a man is lifted into a higher state of being, and his old slough falls off him.

With women, too, there is this especial danger, that fiction has hitherto been apt to tell them that they are nothing if they are not loved, and to fill their heads with the most untrue views of human life. Fiction must try and learn that she is only Truth with a mask on, so that she may speak truer things sometimes with less offence than Truth herself. Fiction must not represent love as always such a very fine thing, or as tending invariably to felicity, thus ignoring the trials of wedded life, and of affection generally—as if life were cut into two parts, one all shade, the other all light. We cannot school Love much : but sometimes he might be induced to listen to reason. And at any rate, all would agree that much mischief may be done by unsound representations of human life in this very important respect.

But, our antagonist may say, these very fictions are amusement, and so far of use as furnishing some food for the mind. Yes ; and I am not prepared to say that bad fictions, or almost anything, may not be better than nothing for the mind. But when continuous cultivation

is joined to education (which should be *the* object for statesmen and governing people of all kinds), people will not be supposed to be educated at the time of their nonage, and then left sight of and hold of for evermore, as far as regards their betters. But it will be seen that we are all so far children, or at least like children in some respects, throughout our lives, that the means of cultivation should be successively offered to us.

It is difficult to see the drift of the foregoing words without an example. But what I mean is this—do not let us merely teach our poor young people to read and write and hear about all manner of arts, sciences, and productions, and then dropping these young people at the most dangerous age, provide no amusements, enable them to carry on no pursuits, throw open no refinements of life to them, show them no parks, no gardens, and leave them to the pothouse and their sordid homes.

Of course they will go wrong if we do.

III. THE REMEDIES.

As poverty came first among the causes, so to remove it must come first among the remedies. For this purpose let it be carefully observed what class of persons furnishes most victims to this sin. Try and mend the evils of that class.

There will be two kinds of poverty, the one arising from general inadequacy of pay for employment that is pretty constant; the other from uncertainty of employ-

ment at particular periods. Each requires to be dealt with differently. Frequently, though, they are found combined.

To meet the first of these evils, more work must be found in the country, or some hands must be removed out of it.

If emigration is to be adopted, it should be done in a different manner from any that has yet been attempted.

But it seems as if something better than, or besides, emigration might be attempted.

It may seem romantic, but I cannot help hoping that considerable investigation into prices may lead people to ascertain better what are fair wages, and that purchasers will not run madly after cheapness. There are everywhere just men who endeavour to prevent the price of labourers' wages from falling below what they (the just men) think right. I have no doubt that this has an effect upon the whole labour-market, Christianity coming in to correct political economy. And so in other matters, I can conceive that private persons may generally become more anxious to put aside the evils of competition, and to give, as well as get, what is fair.

But many things might be done to enable the wages of the poor to go further: and surely the glory of a state, and of the principal people in it, should be that men make the most of their labour in that state.

Improvement of dwellings is one means.¹

Improvements in the representation and transfer of property are other great means to this end.

It may seem that I have wandered far from the subject (the great sin of great cities) to questions of currency and transfer of property. But I am persuaded that there is the closest connection between subjects of this kind. The investment of savings is surely a question of the highest importance. But it is not that only which I mean. All manner of facilities should be given to the poor to become owners of property ; and wherever it could be managed, almost in spite of themselves, they should be made so : that is, by putting by portions of their wages when it is manifestly possible for this to be done, as in the case of domestic servants, or where the employed are living with, or in some measure under the guidance of, their employers.

Much is being attempted by various benevolent persons in ways of this kind ; and the greatest attention should be paid to these experiments.

There are various things which the state could do in these matters ; but it would require a very wise and great

¹ Many a workwoman earns but 7s. a week. She has to pay 3s. or 3s. 6d. for one miserable apartment. Take her food at 3s. or 2s. 6d., and there will remain 1s. a week to provide for clothing, sickness, charity, pleasure, and miscellaneous expenditure of all kinds. It is easy to see that any sudden mishap, such as sickness, must wreck such a person's means ; and also that where lies the chief room for making these means go further, is in the expenditure for lodgings, which now consumes about half her earnings.

government : and how is such a thing to be got ? In the act of rising to power, men fail to obtain the knowledge and thought, and especially the purpose, to use power. There is some Eastern proverb, I think, about the meanest reptiles being found at the top of the highest towers. That, as applied to government, is ill-natured and utterly untrue. But people who are swarming up a difficult ascent, or maintaining themselves with difficulty on a narrow ledge at a great height, are not employed exactly in the way to become great philosophers and reformers of mankind. Constitutional governments may be great blessings, but nobody can doubt that they have their price. There are, however, excellent men in high places amongst us at the present moment : but timidity in attempting good is their portion, especially by any way that has not become thoroughly invincible in argument. I suppose that any man who should try some very generous thing as a statesman, and should fail, would be irretrievably lost as a statesman.

Meanwhile socialism is put forward to fill the void of government : and if government does not make exertion, we may yet have dire things to encounter. By government in the foregoing sentence I mean not only what we are in the habit of calling such, but all the governing and directing persons in a nation. Some of them are certainly making great efforts even now, and there lies our hope.

But supposing that the supply of workmen and work-

women could be better adapted to the demand; and that means could be found to provide in some measure for neutralising the ill effects of the uncertainty of employment (which two things, though very difficult, are still not beyond the range of human endeavour and accomplishment), there would yet remain many, very many, individual cases of utter and sudden distress and destitution amongst young women, which form the chief causes of their fall. Now, how are these to be averted?

There should be some better means of intercommunication between rich and poor than there is at present. It seems as if the priests of all religions might perform that function, and that it should be considered one of their most important functions. It should be done, if possible, by some persons who come amongst the poor for other purposes than to relieve their poverty. At the same time, there might be an administrative officer of high place and power in the government who should be on the alert to suggest and promote good offices of the kind I have just alluded to. In reality the Minister of Education (if we had one) would be the real minister for destitution, as doing most to prevent it; and various minor duties of a humane kind might devolve upon him.

Any one acquainted with the annals of the poor will tell how familiar such words are to him as the following, and how true on inquiry he has found them,—“Father fell ill of the fever” (*the* fever the poor girl may well say, for it is *the* fever which want of air and water, and work-

ing in stifling rooms, have brought upon many thousands of our workmen); "mother and I did pretty well in the straw-bonnet line while she lived; but she died come April two years;" and I've been 'most starved since then, and took to those ways."

"You were fifteen when your mother died, you say, and you have no relations in this town?"

"There is my little brother, and he is in the work-house, and they let me go and see him on Mondays; and there is my aunt, but she is a very poor woman and lives a long, long way off, and has a many children of her own."

"You can read and write?"

"I can read a little."

Now, of course, there are thousands of cases of this kind, in which one feels that the poor child has slipped out of the notice and care of people who would have been but too glad to aid her. I daresay neither mother nor child ever went to any church or chapel. And, in truth, let us be honest and confess that going to church in England is somewhat of an operation, especially to a poor, ill-clad person. This system of pews and places, the want of openness of churches, the length of the service, resulting from the admixture of services, the air of over-cleanliness and respectability which besets the place, and the difficulty of getting out when you like, are sad hindrances to the poor, the ill-dressed, the sick, the timid, the fastidious, the wicked, and the cultivated.

And then, there is nobody into whose ear the poor girl can pour her troubles, *except she comes as a beggar*. This will be said to be a leaning on my part to the confessional. I cannot help that ; I must speak the truth that is in me. And I wish that many amongst us Protestants, who would, I doubt not, welcome the duty, could, without pledging ourselves to all manner of doctrines, but merely by a genial use of those common relations of life which bring us in daily contact with the poor, [fulfil much of what is genuinely good in the functions of a confessor, and thus become brothers of mercy and brothers of charity to the poor.

Meanwhile it is past melancholy, and verges on despair, to reflect upon what is going on amongst ministers of religion, who are often but too intent upon the fopperies of religion to have heart and time for the substantial work entrusted to them—immersed in heart-breaking trash from which no sect is free ; for here are fopperies of discipline, there fopperies of doctrine (still more dangerous as it seems to me). And yet there are these words resounding in their ears, "Pure religion and undefiled is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." And the word "world," as Coleridge has well explained, is this order of things, the order of things you are in. Clerical niceness and over-sanctity, for instance, and making more and longer sermons than there is any occasion for, and insisting upon needless points of doctrine, and making Christianity a stumbling-

block to many, that, excellent clergyman (for there are numbers who deserve the name), that is your world, there lies your temptation to err.

It has occurred to me that schoolmasters and school-mistresses would form good means of communication with the poor : and so much the better from their agency being indirect as regards worldly affairs ;¹ I mean that their first business is not to care for the physical well-being of their pupils. In after-life, they would be likely to know something of the ways and modes of life of their former pupils, and would be most valuable auxiliaries to landlords, master-manufacturers, to masters in general, and to all who are anxious to improve the condition of those under them.

While talking of the schoolmaster, we must not omit to consider the immense importance, in its bearing on our subject, of a better education for women—especially for women of what are called the middling classes—an education which should develop in them the qualities and powers which they are most deficient in, such as stern reasoning ; which is at the foundation of justice, and which should free them from that absurd timidity of *mind* more than of body which prevents their seeing

¹ In this respect the opportunities of medical men are very great ; and surely the medical profession best emancipates itself from any tendency to materialism, and dignifies itself by entering upon the duties and the privileges of a teacher and consoler, when it performs, as it very often does, some of those offices of charity which ever lie just under its hands.

things as they are, and makes them, and consequently men, the victims of conventionality.

This thing, conventionality, is a great enemy to those who would war against the sin we are considering. Hypocrisy is said to be the homage which vice pays to virtue ; conventionality is the adoration which both vice and virtue offer up to worldliness. See its ill effects in this particular case. The discussion of our subject is almost beyond the pale of conventionality. Years ago, an old college friend defined this present writer as a man who could say the most audacious things with the least offence. I hope my friend was right, for, indeed, in discussing this subject I need all that power now. Conventionality stiffens up the whole figure, and sets the eyes in the fixed direction it pleases, so that men and women can pass through the streets ignoring the greatest horrors which surround them. And consider what a dangerous thing it is, when it is once presumed that there is any class with whom we can have no sympathy ; that there are any beings of a different kind from the rest of us. It is not for us, collections of dust, to feel contempt. In a future life we may have such a survey as may justify contempt, but then we should have too much love to feel it. But, indeed, in most cases, it is not contempt, but conventionality, that induces us to pass by and ignore what it is not consistent with good taste to know anything about.

But there is another fertile mode in which conven-

tionality works in increasing the great sin of great cities. And that is by rendering all manner of imaginary wants real wants, and thus helping to enslave men and women. False shame has often, I doubt not, led to the worst consequences—the shame, for instance, arising from not having the clothes of a kind imagined to be fit for a particular station ; and so, people submit to a vice to satisfy a foible.

A class of persons who are found to furnish great numbers of the victims to the sin we are considering is that of domestic servants. This leads to a suspicion that there are peculiar temptations, weaknesses, errors, and mismanagement incident to that class. Their education, to begin with, is wretchedly defective. But besides that, they are particularly liable to the slavery of conventionality : indeed, there are few people more subdued by weak notions of what it is correct for them to have, and to be, and to do : which often ends in anything but a correspondence of the reality of their condition with their ideal. It must be remembered, too, that they undergo, in an especial degree, the temptation of being brought near to a class superior to theirs in breeding and niceness ; and, consequently, that they are very liable to be discontented with their own.

But great improvement might be made in the management of servants. Their efforts to save money should be directed and aided. New means might be invented for that purpose. It might be much more generally

arranged than it is, both in households and in other establishments, that a fund should be formed out of which those female servants who remained a certain time should have a sum of money, in fact what in official life is called "retired allowances."

Then, of course, masters and mistresses should recognise the fact, instead of needlessly discouraging it, that men and women love one another in all ranks—that Mary, if a pleasant or comely girl, is pretty nearly sure at some time or other to have a lover. Let the master and mistress be aware of that fact, and treat it as an open question which may be discussed sometimes with advantage to all parties.

Instead of such conduct, one hears sometimes that such maxims are laid down as that "no followers are allowed." What does a lady mean who lays down such a law in her household? Perhaps she subscribes to some abolition society; which is a good thing in as far as it cultivates her kindly feelings towards an injured race. But does she know that, by this law of hers, as applied to her own household, she is imitating, in a humble way, one of the worst things connected with slavery?

As this prohibition extends to near relations as well as to lovers, if obeyed it renders the position of a servant-girl still more perilous as more isolated; and, if disobeyed, it is a fertile source of the habit of concealment, one of the worst to which all persons in a subordinate situation are prone.

For my own part, I could not bear to live with servants

who were to see none of their friends and relations : I should feel I was keeping a prison, and not ruling a household.

Amongst the principal remedies must be reckoned, or at least hoped for, an improvement in men as regards this sin. To hope for such an improvement will be looked upon as chimerical by some persons, and the notion of introducing great moral remedies for the evil in question as wholly romantic. It seems impossible : every new and great thing does, till it is done ; and then the only wonder is, that it was not done long ago.

Oh that there were more love in the world, and then these things that we deplore could not be. One would think that the man who had once loved any woman, would have some tenderness for all. And love implies an infinite respect. All that was said or done by Chivalry of old, or sung by Troubadours, but shadows forth the feeling which is in the heart of any one who loves. Love, like the opening of the heavens to the Saints, shows for a moment, even to the dullest man, the possibilities of the human race. He has faith, hope, and charity for another being, perhaps but a creation of his imagination : still it is a great advance for a man to be profoundly loving even in his imaginations. What Shelley makes Apollo exclaim, Love might well say too—

“ I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine ;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,

All light of art or nature ;—to my song
Victory and praise in their own right belong."

Indeed, love is a thing so deep and so beautiful, that each man feels that nothing but conceits and pretty words have been said about it by other men.

And then to come down from this, and to dishonour the image of the thing so loved. No man could do so while the memory of love was in his mind. And indeed, even without these recollections, we might hope that, on the contemplation of so much ruin, and the consideration of the exquisite beauty of the thing spoiled, there would sometimes come upon the heart of a man a pity so deep as to protect him from this sin as much as aversion itself could do. And we may imagine that even men of outrageous dissipation, but who have still left some greatness and fineness of mind (like Mirabeau, for example), will have a horror of the sin we are condemning, though very sinful in other respects. And certainly the disgrace to humanity that there is in indiscriminate prostitution is appalling : and, like constrained marriage for money, it has something more repulsive about it than is to be met with in things that may be essentially more wicked.

I hope I am not uncharitable in saying this ; but anybody who thinks so must remember that what is alluded to by me is the worst form of the sin in question ; as, in fact, it disgraces the streets of our principal cities—in utter lovelessness and mercenary recklessness.

I said above, the "exquisite beauty of the thing spoiled." And, in truth, how beautiful a thing is youth—beautiful in an animal. In contemplating it, the world seems young again for us. Each young thing seems born to new hopes. Parents feel this for their children, hoping that something will happen to them quite different from what happened to themselves. They would hardly take all the pains they do with these young creatures, if they could believe that the young people were only to grow up into middle-aged men and women with the usual cares and troubles descending upon them like a securely entailed inheritance. There is something fanciful in all this, and in reality a grown-up person is a much more valuable and worthy creature than most young ones; but still anything that blights the young must ever be most repugnant to humanity.

I had now read over all that I had put down in writing; and, as I laid aside the manuscript, I felt how sadly it fell short of what I had thought to say on this subject. I suppose, however, that even when they are good, a man's words seem poor to himself, for the workman is too familiar with the wrong side of all his workmanship. Moreover, much must always lie in the ear of the hearer. We say enough to set alight the hidden trains of thought which abide in the recesses of men's hearts, unknown to them; and they are startled into thinking for themselves. After all, it is not often so requisite for a writer to make things logically clear to

men, as to put them into the mood he wishes to have them in. I suppose the snake-charmer and the horse-whisperer have some such scheme.

But, said I, as I threw some stones into a pool which was near me in a partial clearing of the wood, I would go on with this work if I knew that all my efforts would make no more stir than these pebbles in that pool. And then I proceeded to think of the topics which are yet before me, full of doubt and difficulty. I should like to have some talk with Ellesmere, I exclaimed ; I fear he will have no sympathy with me, and an utter disbelief in anybody doing any good in this matter. But he is a shrewd man of the world, and he speaks out fearlessly. It would be well to hear his remarks beforehand, while they may yet be of use to me. I certainly will consult him.

I stept out of the wood into the beaten road, a change which I always feel to be like that which occurs in the mind of a man who, having been wrapt in some romance of his own, suddenly disengages himself from it and talks with his fellows upon the ordinary topics of the day, affecting a shrewd care about the price of corn and the state of our foreign relations.

By the time I reached Worth-Ashton I had left all forest thoughts well behind me, and was quite at home on the broad beaten road of commonplace affairs.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAVE read the foregoing notes to Ellesmere, whom I have asked to come here the first lawyer's holiday that he could make. During the reading, which was in my study, he said nothing, but seemed, as I thought, unusually grave and attentive. When it was finished, he proposed that we should walk out upon the downs. Still he made no remark, but strolled on moodily, until I said to him, "I am afraid, Ellesmere, you have some heavy brief which sits upon your mind just now ; or, perhaps, I have somewhat wearied you in reading so much to you upon a subject about which you probably do not care much." "I care more than you do," he replied—"forgive my abruptness, Milverton, but what I say is true. To show you why I do care would be to tell you a long story, and to betray to you that which I had never intended to tell mortal man.

"But if you care to hear it, I will tell you ; it bears closely upon some of your views, and may modify them in some way. I can talk to you on such a theme better than to almost any man, for it is like talking to a philosophic system ; and yet there is still some humanity left in you, so that one may hope for a little sympathy now

and then without having too much, or being afflicted with pity and wonder and foolish exclamations of any kind." I did not interrupt him to defend myself, being too anxious to hear what he had to say. Besides I saw this attack upon me was partly an excuse to himself for telling me something which he hardly meant to tell. He threw himself down upon the turf, and after a few minutes' silence, thus began :—

Well, I was once upon my travels staying for a few days in a German town, not a very obscure or a very renowned one ; but indeed the whereabouts is a very unimportant matter, and I do not particularise any of the minute circumstances of my story, because I do not wish hereafter to be reminded of them. I remember it was on a Sunday, and the day was fine. I remember, too, I went to church, to a Protestant church, where I did not understand much of what I heard, but liked what I did. They sang psalms, such as I fancy Luther would have approved of ; and I thought it would be a serious thing for a hostile army to meet a body of men who had been thus singing. Grand music, such as you, for instance, would like better, is a good thing too. Our cathedrals might have combined both. I do not know why I tell you all this, for it does not immediately concern my story, but I suppose it is because I do not like to approach it too quickly, and I must linger on the details of a day which is so deeply imprinted upon my memory. I remember well the sermon, or rather the bits of it which

I understood, and out of which I made my sermon for myself. That pathetic word *verloren* (lost) occurred many times. Then there was a great deal about the cares of this life occupying so much time, and then about the pleasures, or the thoughts of misspent youth being impressed upon manhood, to the perennial detriment of the character. I made out, or fancied I did, that it was a sermon showing how short a time was given to spiritual life. I daresay it was a very commonplace sermon that I made of it; but somehow, the sermons we preach to ourselves, in which, by the way, we can be sure of taking the most apt illustrations from the store of our own follies, are always interesting. And when the good preacher, a most benign and apostolic-looking man, pronounced the benediction, I felt as if I had been hearing some friendly searching words which might well be laid to heart. After the sermon was over, I strolled about. The day moved on, and towards evening time, I went with the stream of the towns-people, gentle and simple, to some public gardens which lay outside the town and were joined to it by beautiful walks. People speak of the sadness of being in a crowd and knowing no one. There is something pleasurable in it too. I wandered amongst the various groups of quiet, decorous, beer-imbibing Germans, who, in family-parties, had come out to these gardens to drink their beer, smoke their pipes, and hear some music. In those unfortunate regions they have not made a ghastly idol of the Sunday.

At last I sat down at a table where a young girl and

a middle-aged woman, who carried a baby, were refreshing themselves with some very thin potation. They looked poor decent people. I soon entered into conversation with them, and therefore did not leave it long a matter of doubt that I was an Englishman. I perceived that something was wrong with my friends, although I could not comprehend what it was. I could see that the girl could hardly restrain herself from bursting into tears; and there was something quite comical in the delight she expressed at some feats on the tight-rope, which she would insist upon my looking at, and her then, in a minute afterwards, returning to her quiet distress and anxious deplorable countenance. A proud English girl would have kept all her misery under due control, especially in a public place; but these Germans are a more simple natural people.

Having by degrees established some relations between the party and myself by ordering some coffee and handing it round, and then letting the baby play with my watch, I asked what it was that ailed the girl. The girl turned round and poured out a torrent of eloquence, which, however, considerably exceeding the pace at which any foreign language enters into my apprehension, was totally lost upon me; except that I perceived she had some complaint against somebody, and that she had a noble open countenance which, from long experience of the witness-box, I felt was telling me an unusual proportion of truth. One part of the discourse I perceived very clearly to be about money, and as she touched her gown

(which was very neat and nice), it had something to do with the price of the said gown.

We then talked of England, whereupon she asked me to take her with me as a servant. This abrupt speech might astonish some persons ; but not those who have travelled much. I daresay the same request has often been made to you, Milverton.

Milverton. Oh, yes. They fancy this is an earthly paradise for getting money, bounded by a continual fog.

Ellesmere. She then questioned me much as to the distance of England from where we were. And as I saw she was in a desperate mood, and might attempt some desperate adventure, I took care to explain to her the distance and the difficulties of the journey. Besides which, I contrived, putting the severest pressure on my stock of German, to convey to her that London was rather an extensive town, containing two millions of people, and that it was not exactly the place for an unfriended young girl to be wandering about.

"The same thing everywhere, everywhere," she exclaimed, in a tone of mournful reproach which I felt was levelled at our unchivalrous sex in general.

I felt interested to understand her story, and beginning to question her in detail again, ascertained so far, that she was or had been a servant, that she had been accustomed to take charge of children, having had eleven under her charge, that the wages were most wretched, which they certainly were ; but still, it was not that or any of the ordinary kind of grievances which was now

distressing her. Whenever we came to the gist of the discourse, she became more emphatic and I more stupid. At last I bethought me that if she were to write out what she had to say, I could then understand it well enough. This was a bright idea, and one which I was able to convey to her. She was to bring me the writing on the ensuing morning in the great square. And having come to this agreement we parted ; I taking care, with lawyer-like caution, to tell her that I did not know whether I could be of any use to her, with other discouraging expressions.

The next morning, duly fortified with my pocket dictionary, I sat myself down to read her statement. Ah, how clearly the whole scene is before me. It was on a broad bench, close to a hackney-coach stand, within sight of the palace. She looked over me and read aloud ; and when I could not make out a word, we paused, and the dictionary was put in requisition. The nearest hackney-coachman lying back on his box threw now and then an amused glance at the proceeding. Hers was a simple touching story, touchingly told. I now know every word, every letter of it ; but then it was very hard for me to comprehend.

It began by giving her birth, parentage, and education. She was born of poor parents in the country, a few miles out of the town. She was now an orphan. She had come into service in the town. Her master had endeavoured to seduce her ; but she had succeeded in giving some notion of her miserable position to a middle-aged

man, and friend of her family, who had taken an interest in her, and promised to receive her into his service. Then she gave warning to her mistress, who could not imagine the cause, and was displeased at her leaving. She could not tell her mistress for fear of vexing her.

The character given by the mistress (which I saw) went well with this statement, as it was the praise of a person displeased.

The new master that was to be, had told her where to go to (the lodgings where she was now staying), and ordered her to get decent clothes before coming into his service. He did not live in that town. She left her place accordingly, provided herself with the necessary things, and awaited his orders. Meanwhile his plans were changed. He had just married, was probably about to travel, and wrote that he could not take her in. I am not sure that there was any deliberate wrong-doing or treachery on his part—merely a wicked carelessness; forgetting what a thing it is for a poor girl to be out of place, and not knowing that she had taken the step, perhaps, at the time he wrote. She had written again, and had received no answer. She was left in debt and in the utmost distress.

This is the substance of what I eventually got out by cross-examination. She had been out into the suburbs in search of a place when I met her yesterday. The woman with the child, who was no relation, had reiterated to me there that she was a good girl and in great distress.

The usual wicked easy way of getting out of her difficulties had been pressed upon her—*Ich mag das Geld nicht auf eine schlechte Art bekommen, sonst würde ich es in kurzer Zeit haben*; but she trusted that “the dear God would never permit this, so she put her trust in Him.” *Ich hoffe aber, der liebe Gott wird das nicht zugeben, denn ich verlasse mich auf Ihn.*

I remember that, occasionally, while we were spelling over what she had written, her large beautiful hand (do not smile, Milverton, a hand may be most beautiful and yet large) rested on the page. There was a deep scar upon it, the mark of a burn, that told of some household mishap. I have seen many beautiful hands before and after, but none so beautiful to me.

At last we got through the writing and paused. “This is a bad business,” I exclaimed; and then I fell into a reverie, not upon her particular case so much as upon the misery that there is in the world. At last I looked up and felt quite remorseful at the wistful agonised expression of the girl, whom I had been keeping in suspense all this time while indulging my own thoughts. She evidently thought (you know the extremely careless ill-dressed figure I generally am) that to assist her was quite out of my power. And so it was at the moment, for I had not the requisite silver about me. Indeed why should the rich carry any money about with them, when they have always the poor to borrow it from? However, I had some silver in my pocket and gave her that, promising to bring the rest. Her ecstasy was unbounded: of course

she began to cry (no woman is above that) ; though seeing my excessive dislike to that proceeding, she did the best to suppress it, only indulging in an occasional sob. Her first idea was what she could do for the money. She would work for any time. We had found out that writing was better than talking ; and here are her very words (I always carry them about with me), "*Was soll ich Ihnen für einen Dienst dafür thun ?*" "What shall I do for you in the way of any service for this?" "Nothing," I replied, "but only to be a good girl."

One thing I have omitted to tell you : but I may as well tell it. It is no matter now. While we were reading over the letter, I happened to ask her whether she had a lover. I had hardly asked the question before I would have given anything to have been able to recall it, as we sometimes do in Court when a question is objected to. Her simple answer came crushing into my ears, "Yes, but a poor man and far away." She thought my object in asking was to ascertain whether there was any help to be got from any other quarter : this she answered, so like her sensible self, without any bridling-up or nonsense of any kind—a simple answer to a simple question. But the words went down like a weight into my heart, which has never been quite lifted off again. In short, Milverton, I loved.

What should possess me to-day to tell you this wild story I know not. I know you really care for nothing but great interests and great causes, as you call them.

With intense mad love for any one human being you cannot sympathise. I always noted the same in you from your boyhood upwards. Talk to you of a body of men—of a class—of a million, for instance, of people suffering anything, and you are immediately interested. But for any one of us you care nothing. I see through you, and always have. But I like you. Do not answer me, you know it is true.

I did not answer him ; though knowing what he said to be most untrue, and yet to have just that dash of plausibility in it which makes injustice so hard to unravel. He proceeded. I saw Gretchen (that was her name) more than once again, and had a great deal of talk with her, finding my first impressions amply verified ; and I still think her one of the best intellects, and most beautiful natures, I have ever seen. I had in my pocket a very learned letter from one of the German Professors of law to whom I had delivered a letter of introduction on passing through his town, on some points of jurisprudence, referring to Savigny's work. The parts of this which had been unintelligible I made her construe to me ; some of it was quite independent of technicalities, but merely required hard thinking and clear explanation. The girl with my help made it all out. But of course it was not of such themes that she liked to talk ; for women love personal talk, and their care is to know, not what men think about, but what they feel. One speech of hers dwells in my mind. " You must be very happy at

home," she said. I thought of my mouldy chambers and the kind of life I lead, and replied with an irony I could not check, "very:" and so satisfied her gentle questionings.

I did not delay my departure longer than I had at first intended; for in these cases when you have done any good, it is well to be sure you do not spoil it in any way. She would not have any more money than a trifling sum that was a little more than sufficient to pay off the debts already due, and they amounted to the very same sum she had originally mentioned to me in the gardens. We parted. Before parting she begged me to tell her my name: then timidly she kissed my hand; and, bursting into tears, threw her hood over her face and hurried away a little distance. Afterwards I saw her turn to watch the departure of the huge diligence in which I had ensconced myself.

Milverton. And you never saw her any more?

Ellesmere. Once more. Not being a philosopher or a philanthropist, I do not easily forget those I once care for. I studied how to protect her in every way. I mastered the politics of that German town; and learnt all the intricacies of the little Court there. I ascertained everything respecting our relations with it, and who amongst our diplomatists was desirous of the residence there, when there should be a change. I busied myself more in politics than I had done; and I believe I must own that my speech on the —— intervention, which had its merits and cost me great labour, was spoken for Gretchen. Of course, I need hardly say that I spoke

only what I most sincerely thought ; but I should probably have let politics alone but for her sake. At last there was an opportunity of a new appointment being made of a Minister to that German Court ; and the man who wished for it, and whose just claims I had aided as I best could, obtained it. His wife, Lady R., one of those brilliant women of the world who are often more amiable than we give them credit for being, had long noticed the care with which I had cultivated her society. She imagined it was for one of her beautiful daughters, and did not look unkindly upon me. Before she went to reside at —— I undeceived her, telling her the whole truth (the best thing in such a case) and binding her to secrecy. She promised to look out for Gretchen, and to take her into her household. I told Lady R. that Gretchen had a lover, and said, that if anything could be done for him, without lifting him out of his rank, it should be. Neither would I have Gretchen made anything different from what she was. I could have given her money by handfuls ; but that is not the way to serve people. At the same time I implored Lady R. to let me know immediately in case anything should ever occur to break off the marriage.

Milverton. And you would have put in your suit and married this girl ?

Ellesmere. There was but little chance, I fear ; but you may be sure no opportunity would have escaped me. As for the world, I am one of the few persons who really care but little for it. The hissing of collected Europe,

provided I knew the hissers could not touch me, would be a grateful sound rather than the reverse—that is, if heard at a reasonable distance.

Well, but I told you I saw Gretchen once more. Yes, once more. You may remember that some time ago I had a very severe illness, and was not able to attend the Courts on an occasion when I was much wanted. This appeared in the newspapers of the day, and so, I conjecture, came to the knowledge of Gretchen; who, in her quiet indefatigable way, had learned English, and was a great student, as I afterwards heard, of English newspapers. She had also contrived to learn more about my life than I chose to tell her when I answered her question about my being happy; and the poor girl had formed juster notions of the joyousness and comfort of a lawyer's chambers in London. She begged for leave of absence to visit a sick friend: Lady R. conjectured, I believe, where she was going, and consented.

A few days afterwards there was a knock at my door (I was still very ill and unable to leave my sitting-room, but solacing life as best I could by the study of a great pedigree-case), when my clerk, with an anxious and ashamed countenance, put his head in, made one of these queer faces which he does when he thinks a great bore is wishing to see me and that I had better say "No," and exclaimed, "A young woman from Germany, sir, wants to see you." I knew instinctively who it was, but had the presence of mind to make a gesture signifying I would not see her (for I could not have spoken), and I

was afraid in my present state of weakness I should betray myself in some way, if I were to see her unprepared. While the parleying was going on in the passage, I collected myself sufficiently to ring for my clerk, and tell him he might appoint the young woman to come in the afternoon. By that time I had reflected upon my part, and was somewhat of myself again. She came : I scolded and protested ; she did nothing in reply, but look at me, and say how thin I was ; and there was no resisting the quiet, affectionate, discreet way in which she installed herself every day for some hours as head nurse. Even my old laundress relaxed so far as to say that Gradgin (for that was what she called her) was a good girl and not hoity-toity : and my clerk, Peter, a very cantankerous fellow, was heard to remark, that for his part he did not like young women much, but Miss Gradgin was better than most, and certainly his master did somehow eat more of anything made by her than by anybody else, and never threatened now to throw the chicken-broth he brought in at his head.

I jest at these things, Milverton : and in truth what remains for us often in this world but to jest ? Which of the Queens was it, by the way, who on the scaffold played with the sharpness of the axe, and said something droll about her little neck ? Well, I jest ; but this visit of Gretchen's was a very severe trial to me. It is a common trial though, I daresay. No doubt many a person dotes upon or adores some one else, who is, happily, as unconscious of the doting or adoration as

Ram Dass, or any other heathen deity, of the fanatic love of his worshippers. To the loving person, however, it is like walking over hot iron with no priest-anointed feet, and yet with unmoved countenance, not even allowed to look stoical. I could not resist listening sometimes to Gretchen's wise, innocent, pleasant talk about all the new things she was seeing; and perhaps if I had not kept carefully before me the claims of the absent peasant lover, some day when she was moving about me like sunlight in the room, I might in some moment of frenzy, which I should never have forgiven myself, have thrown myself at her feet and asked her to take these dingy chambers and my faded self and all my belongings under her permanent control. But wiser, sterner, juster thoughts prevailed.

I got better, and it was time for Gretchen to be thinking of going. Of course no foreigner can leave London without seeing the Thames Tunnel; and I observed that the morose Peter, though in general very contemptuous of sight-seeing and sight-seers, was wonderfully ready to escort Gretchen to see the Tunnel, which I thought a great triumph on her part. I spared myself the anguish of parting with her: a case came on rather unexpectedly in a distant part of the country, and I was sent for "special," as we say. Kings and tetrarchs might have quarrelled for what I cared; I would not have meddled in their feuds to lose one hour of Gretchen's sweet companionship, if I might have had it heartily and fairly: but, as things were, I thought this a famous

opportunity for making my escape without a parting. And so I started suddenly for the North, bidding Gretchen adieu by letter, expressing all my gratitude for her attention, and being able to rule and correct my expressions as it seemed good to me. Before I returned she had left, taking leave of me in a fond kind letter, in which she blamed me much for being so regardless of my health, and added a few words about my evident anxiety to get rid of her, which sounded to me like some wild strain of irony. Ever since, my chambers have seemed to me very different from what they were before: I would not quit them for a palace. One or two new articles of furniture were bought by Gretchen, who effected a kind of quiet revolution in my dusky abode. These are my household gods.

One of her alterations I must tell you. You know my love for light and warmth; like that of an Asiatic long exiled in a Northern country, whose calenture is not of green fields, but of sufficient heat and light once more to bathe in. Well, Gretchen soon found out my likings; and this was one of her plans to gratify me and make me well. My principal room has a window to the south-west, a bay-window, or rather a window in a bayed recess. After ascertaining, as well as she could, from Peter what were the limits throughout the year of the sun's appearance on the walls of this recess, on a sudden one morning Gretchen came in with a workman and two antique looking-glasses of the proper size, which (a present of her own, and taxing her resources highly) she fixed, one

on each side of the recess, from whence they have ever since thrown a reflected light into the room, which makes it feel at times uncomfortable, like an ill-dressed person in a great company. It is a trifling thing to mention to you, but very characteristic of her.

I have said nothing to you, Milverton, which can, describe herself; and, indeed, I always look upon all descriptions of women, in books and elsewhere, as having something mean, poor, and sensuous about them. I may tell you that she always, from the first time I saw her, reminded me a little of the bust of Cicero. She had the same delicate critical look, though she was what you would call a great large girl. She might have been a daughter of his if he had married, what he would have called, a barbarian German woman. In nature, she has often recalled to me Jeannie Deans, only that she has more tenderness. She would have spoken falsely (I am sorry to say) for Effie; and would have died of it.

Lady R., when she was over here some little time ago, said to me, to comfort me I suppose, that though Gretchen was a sweet girl, she did not quite see what there was in her to make her so attractive to a man like me. But these women do not always exactly understand one another, or appreciate what makes them dear to particular men. She added, "But still I do not know how it was Gretchen became the great authority in our household: they all referred to her about everything, and she did a good deal of their work." In fact, she was the personification of common sense; only that what we

mean by common sense is apt to be hard, overwise, and disagreeable : hers was the common sense of a romantic person, and of one who had great perception of the humorous. I think I hear her low, long-continued dimpling laugh as I used to put forth some of my odd theories about men and things, to hear what she would say. And she generally did say something fully to the purpose. But action was her forte. There was a noiseless, soft activity about her like that of light.

Milverton. You speak of her as if she were dead. Is it so ?

Ellesmere. No : much the same thing—married. There was an opportunity for advancing her lover. It was done, not without my knowledge. She had by this time saved some money. They were married six months ago. I sent the wedding gown. Do not let us talk any more about it. I tell it you to show you how deeply I care about your subject ; for sometimes I think with terror, as I go along the streets, that but for my providential interference, Gretchen might have been like one of those tawdry girls who pass by me. Yes, she might. I observed that she had a pure horror of debt : and I do not know that circumstances might not have been too strong for her virtue. For by nature virtuous, if ever woman was, she was.

Ellesmere was silent for a few minutes. Then he said, “ Let us have no more of this talk to-day, or, indeed, at any time, unless I should begin the subject. One of the greatest drawbacks upon making any confidence is

that, as regards that topic, you have then lost the royal privilege of beginning the discourse about yourself, and another can begin to speak to you, or to think (and you know that he is thinking), about the matter, when you do not wish to be so much as thought of by any one."

He then began to speak about some chemical experiments which he wanted me to try ; and from that went on to talk about infusoria, wishing me to undertake some microscopical investigations to confirm, or disprove, a certain theory of his ; adding, by way of inducement, "These lower forms and orders of life ought, you know, to be very interesting to people in the country, who themselves, in comparison with us, the inhabitants of towns, can only, by courtesy, and for want of more precise and accurate language, be said to live. In fact, their existence is entirely molluscous." Thus, in his usual jeering way, he concluded a walk which left me with matter for meditation for many a solitary ramble over the downs, which we then traversed on our way homewards.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT is not often in the course of our lives, especially after we have passed our nonage, that we can reckon upon being thoroughly undisturbed and free to think of what we like for a given time. It is one of the advantages of travelling in a carriage alone, that it affords an admirable opportunity for thinking. The trees, the houses, the farm-yards, the woods flit by, and form a sort of silent chorus from the outward world. There is a sense of power in overcoming distance at no expense of muscular exertion of one's own, which is not without an elevating and inspiriting influence upon the thoughts. The first thing, however, is, that we are pretty nearly sure of being undisturbed. The noise around us is a measured one, and is accounted for ; it does not, therefore, fret the most nervous person. Dr. Johnson thought that travelling in a post-chaise with a pretty woman was one of the highest delights in life. Very ungallantly I venture to suggest that the pretty woman had better be omitted. She will talk sometimes, and break the whole charm, thus preventing you even from thinking about her.

Having such notions of the high merits appertaining to the inside of a post-chaise in motion ; in fact, considering it a place which, for the research of truth, may

be put in competition with the groves of Academus, it was with some pleasure that I found myself alone in the carriage which had conveyed Ellesmere to the neighbouring railway station on his return to town. It was the first time since our walk to the downs that I had had to myself, and been able to think over all that he had then told me. He was right in saying that his story bore close reference to the subject I have been considering. That such a man should find so much to attach himself to in this poor German girl, who might so easily have been found in a very different situation, makes one think with dismay how some of the sweetest and highest natures amongst women may be in the ranks of those who are abandoned to the rude address of the coarsest and vilest of men. I say "some of the sweetest and highest natures," for there is a cultivation in women quite independent of literary culture, rank, and other advantages. They are more on a level with each other than men. I do not reckon this as a proof of their excellence : nor do I at all indulge in the fancy that there is something so peculiarly charming in uncultivated people. On the contrary, they are seldom just, seldom tolerant ; and, as regards innocence and child-like nature, these merits abound in persons the most cultivated, and even the most conversant with the world. I have no doubt we all appear simple and unsophisticated enough to superior beings. It is not, therefore, that I mean to laud the innocence and naïveté of ignorance : but only to point out that there is a certain platform, as it were,

of grace and unselfishness—of tact, delicacy, and teachableness—on which I have no doubt an immense number of women are placed, which makes any corruption of such high capabilities the more to be regretted.

Dunsford, in his *Friends in Council*, has failed in representing Ellesmere, if he has not shown him to be a most accomplished man and a thorough gentleman ; not exactly the conventional gentleman, but a man whom savages would certainly take to be a chief in his own country, showing high courtesy to others with a sort of coolness as regards himself : the result of being free from many of the usual small shames, petty ends, trivial vanities, and masked social operations which dwarf men in their intercourse with others, or make them like clowns daubed over in ugly patches. His pursuits, as may have been seen, are on a larger sphere than those of most lawyers. Very observant, too, of the world, I have scarcely a doubt he was right in his high appreciation of that girl's character.

We sometimes think we have no romance left ; but with all our borrowed ways of thinking, our foolish imitative habits, our estimations grosser than those of Portia's disappointed suitors, some of us occasionally do still look at things and people as they are. And that alone produces romance enough.

I wonder whether Gretchen had any love for him ! Alas, I suspect, from a fond wistful way in which I once saw Lucy look at him, that there is an English girl who

would mightily like to occupy Gretchen's place in his heart. But he casts not a thought at her : such is the perversity of things.

But I must turn from thinking about Ellesmere to the consideration of my subject, which is favoured by this quiet moment and this retired spot. It seems to me that the best thing I can do will be, not so much to seek for new arguments and new views, as to strengthen and enlighten those already put forward in a preceding chapter.

I spoke, for instance, there of the cause that poverty was of this sin. Now women do not equally partake with men in the general poverty in a land, but they have to endure an undue proportion of it, by reason of many employments being closed to them ; so that the sex which is least able and least fitted to seek for employment by going from home, finds the means of employment at home most circumscribed.

I cannot but think that this is a mismanagement which has proceeded, like many others, from a wrong appreciation of women's powers. If they were told that they could do many more things than they do, they would do them. As at present educated, they are, for the most part, thoroughly deficient in method. But this surely might be remedied by training. To take a very humble and simple instance. Why is it that a man-cook is always better than a woman-cook ? Simply because a man is more methodical in his arrangements, and relies more upon his weights and measures. An

eminent physician told me, that he thought that women were absolutely deficient in the appreciation of time. But this I hold to be merely one instance of their general want of accuracy ; for which there are easy remedies : that is, easy if begun early enough. Now it does seem perfectly ludicrous that in the dispensing of women's gear they should need the intervention of men. I daresay there is some good reason for the present practice, some advantage gained ; but I should think it likely that this advantage would be far more than counterbalanced by the advantage of employing women altogether in these transactions.

Again, in the processes of the arts, and in many ways which I have not time or space to enter upon, women might be provided with new sources of employment, if they were properly trained.

But the truth is, there is a great want of ingenuity and arrangement throughout the world in not providing employment for its unemployed, both men and women. Things that imperatively want to be done stare you in the face at every corner.

If we consider the nature of the intellect of women, we really can see no reason for the restrictions laid upon them in the choice of employments. They possess talents of all kinds. Government, to be sure, is a thing not fit for them, their fond prejudices coming often in the way of justice. Direction also they would want, not having the same power, I think, of imagination that men have, nor the same method, as I observed before. But

how well women might work under direction. In how many ways where tact and order alone are required they might be employed, and also, in how many higher ways, where talent is required.

I suppose I shall have to say something about unhappy marriages as a cause of the evil I have named as the great sin of great cities. Of course there are a great many unhappy marriages. A weighty moral writer of the present day intimates that there is no medium in the felicity, or infelicity, of marriage; that it is either the summit of joy, or the depth of torment. I venture to differ from him in this respect. On the contrary, it seems to me probable that in marriage the whole diapason of joy and sorrow is sounded, from perfect congeniality, if there be such a thing (which I doubt), to the utmost extent of irritable uncongeniality.

How this may be I know not, but though unhappiness in marriage may form some justification of, or at least some explanation for, other connections more or less permanent, yet I contend no want of domestic love or peace can justify the particular sin which is the subject of our present theme.

At the same time I am far from pronouncing that the law of divorce may not require considerable modification; but really there are so many large questions to deal with in reference to this present subject, that I feel I cannot presume to enter upon this one of divorce, to discuss which properly would require any one man's life. I can-

not, however, omit all allusion to it, as it has undoubted reference to the subject in hand ; and I may remark that it is a great deal easier to pass by Milton, or to sneer at him, for his great work on *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, than to answer the arguments therein contained. The truth is, that there is scarcely anywhere a mind sufficiently free from the overruling influence of authority on these and similar subjects to be able clearly and boldly to apprehend the question for itself.

However, it does not become us to pronounce, if we are to judge from the results only, that our present notions of marriage are the best possible. I can imagine a native of some country where polygamy is practised, contending that the state of things in his own country in this respect is preferable to that in ours ; not, perhaps, as producing less misery, but at any rate less dishonour both to men and women. We should find it difficult to gainsay him in this, as of course he would make much of the immense and obvious evils of the sin we have been considering.

The greatest and most dangerous objection—I should rather say assertion—which will be made against anything that has been said in this chapter and the two preceding ones, is one that will be uttered with a derisive smile by men of the world, as they are called ; that is, of a very small section of it. Thinking they are deeply cognisant of the human heart, because they are very much afraid of its aberrations, and that they are fully aware of the powers of the imagination, from having

little themselves and discouraging the little they ever had—lapped, perhaps, in a kind of prosperity which singularly blinds those who have the misfortune to enjoy an uninterrupted career of it—bounded by a small circle of equally well-conditioned, self-satisfied individuals—men of this kind pronounced not only upon the influx and efflux of tea, coffee, sugar, and gold (in which, by the way, their dicta are generally wrong), but they are also able specifically to declare about the ebb and flow of the passions or the affections; about the tenderest and the most delicate of the relations in human life. Talk to any man of this worldly class about moral causes, or religious influences, he is equally at home with them as if you were to ask him about the subjects most “immersed in matter.” I can see the self-sufficient way in which if he had lived some seven hundred years ago, after the first crusade, he would have pronounced with a wave of his hand after dinner, that there never could be such another adventure again, as the first had by no means been found to pay. But soon all Europe is listening to the clink of hammers upon harness, and thousands, hundreds of thousands, are repeating an adventure not good in a commercial sense, but still which gave a dignity to them such as the stayers at home never attained.

Having damaged, as much as I can, the imaginary opponents—who I know, however, will prove real ones—before I bring their saying into presence, I will now tell what that saying will assuredly be.

In answer to all that has been urged in the way of remedy for this evil, they will simply reply, "But these things always must be; the laws of supply and demand hold good in this case as in others: to think otherwise is the mere dream of writers and other ideologists: no wonder Napoleon disliked such people: we do too."

To this, taking them on their own ground, I would reply that at any rate the force of circumstances (a phrase they delight in) may be so adapted and modified as only to meet the exact necessities of the case. I mean, for instance, that those by nature most inclined to innocence should have the fairest opportunities of remaining innocent; that, in short, it should be the worst people that fell into the worst ways. This, of course, is only an ideal scheme too; but there might be a practical tendency in that direction.

In reality, however, it is the greatest mistake to suppose that such laws of supply and demand are not overruled by much higher influences. All things depend for their ultimate aim and end on the spirit in which they are undertaken; which spirit cannot well be concealed. The measured generosity of mean people, whose gifts are all strictly related to duty, does not deceive others; the bystander knows that these people are not generous, though he cannot exactly confute them from their words or their deeds. Again, people may pretend to be religious; but if the real spirit is not in them, its absence is soon felt. I am merely giving these as instances of the deficiency of the right spirit being felt, or perceived,

even when the outward deeds or words are there. But the spirit which results from conviction, and which gradually modifies public opinion, is one of the most powerful things known : who shall put limits to it ? It will meet and occasionally master all the passions. Take the question of duelling, for instance ; if you could have told a man of former times, when duelling was rife, that it would soon be almost done away with, "What !" he would have exclaimed, "will there be no lovers, no jealous husbands, no walls to take the inner side of, no rudeness, no drunkenness, no calumny, no slander ? And, if there are, how will the quarrels that must arise from these things be adjusted ? Do not talk such Utopian nonsense to me, but come and let us practise in the shooting gallery." And, yet, see how stealthily, how unassumingly, how completely public opinion, the result of a wise and good spirit gradually infused into men, has disarmed duellism ; as quietly, in fact, as the king's guard in former days would have taken away the weapons of any two presumptuous gentlemen who brought their quarrelling too near his Majesty's vicinity in his parks.

One of the kind of reproaches that will ever be made with much or little justice (generally with little justice), against any men who endeavour to reform or improve anything, is that they are not ready with definite propositions ; that they are like the Chorus in a Greek play, making general remarks about nature and human affairs, without suggesting any clear and decided course to be

taken. Sometimes this reproach is just ; but very often, on the other hand, it is utterly unreasonable. Frequently the course to be taken in each individual instance is one that it would be almost impossible to decide, still more to lay down with minuteness, without a knowledge of the facts in the particular instance ; whereas what is wanted is not to suggest a course of action, but a habit of thought which will modify not one or two actions only, but all actions that come within the scope of that thought.

Again, there are people who are not so unreasonable as to expect suggestions that will exactly meet their own individual cases, but still they wish for general rules or general propositions to be laid down. There must be instant legislation to please them ; something visibly done. And often it is needful that something should be done, which however falls, perhaps, under the functions of other men than the original social reformers. There is always such a belief in what is mechanical, that men of ordinary minds cannot assure themselves that anything is done, unless something palpable is before them ; unless they can refer to a legislative act, or unless there is a building, an institution, a newspaper, or some visible thing, which illustrates the principle. But in reality the first thing is to get people to be of the same mind as regards social evils. When once they are of this mind, the evils will soon disappear. A wise conviction is like light ; it gradually dawns upon a few minds, but a slight mist rises also with this rise of light ; as the day goes on and the light rises higher, spreads further, and is more intense,

growth of all kinds takes place silently and without great demonstration of any kind. This light permeates, colours, and enlarges all it shines upon.

Now, to apply some of these thoughts to our present subject. I do not believe that there will always be a certain set amount of wrong-doing in this or in any other case. On the other hand, I do not expect that people will suddenly rush into virtue. To take a very humble instance, the suppression of smoke, one of the most visible evils in the world, how long a time it takes to subdue that! From Count Rumford's time to the present day, how many persons have written, preached, talked, experimented, on the subject? And if this long process has to take place in so obvious a matter, how much more must it be so in the subtler regions of men's minds, in their habits of justice or of forethought? But, insensibility, even in these dim and remote regions, good counsels, or evil counsels, will eventually prevail—as quietly, perhaps, but as surely, as the submerged coral rock grows and increases from the accumulations of minute, gelatinous, mulluscous creatures.

The train of thought which I have described above did not of course occur to me in the methodical way in which I have now put it down, but with frequent breaks and interruptions both from internal thoughts and the aspect of external objects. Now it was the noise of the mill, now the beauty of some homestead, now the neatness of some well-cultivated field, or the richness of some full farmyard that claimed my attention. But when I

had finished thinking of the answer that must be given to that worldly objection, "that there is a demand for wickedness, and that there must be a supply of it," I leaned back in the carriage and turned my mind to other branches of the subject. Just at that time, whether it was that a troop of little children came out of a school-house close to the road, or that I noticed the early budding in the hedgerows, as I passed along, I began to think of what had been alluded to in a former chapter; namely, what a beautiful thing youth is, and how sad that it should be spoilt at its outset. As I went on to think not only of the negative, that is, of the loss of so much beautiful life and promise, but of the positive misery inflicted, which surely is well worth taking into consideration.

Tragedy is very grand, with grand accessories,

" Presenting Thebes', or Pelops' line,
Or the Tale of Troy divine,"

when a purple-clad man, free from all the pettinesses of life, pours out a strain of sorrow which melts all hearts, and goes some way to dignify the sufferings of all humanity. But after all, in some squalid den, as great if not a greater tragedy is often transacted, only without the scenery and decorations of the other, when some poor victim of seduction—now steeped in misery and sunk in the abysses of self-degradation, amidst blasphemy, subject to reviling that she scarcely hears or easily endures from habit—lies on the bed of sickness thinking of her mother's gentle assiduities in some of the ailments of

her childhood, and covers her face with her hands at the thought that that mother, dead, perhaps heart-broken, may now, a spirit, be looking down upon her. Well might Camoens wonder "that in so small a theatre as that of one poor bed, it should please Fortune to represent such great calamities. And I, too," he says, "as if these calamities did not suffice, must needs put myself on their side ; for to attempt to resist such evils would be something shameful."

I had meditated but a few minutes on this cry of anguish, which I seemed to hear as it came from the dying bed of one of the most unfortunate of men of genius, and which I fancied, too, I heard from many other death-beds, when we turned out of the main road into the lanes which lead to Worth-Ashton. With all our pretences at governing or directing our thoughts, how they lie at the mercy of the merest accident ! Once in these lanes I quitted my subject, and began to think how the way to my house might be shortened, and I was already deep in the engineering difficulties of the proceeding, when somewhat satirically I said to myself, What a mania you have for improving everything about you : could you not, my dear Leonard, spare a little of this reforming energy for yourself ? One would think that you did not need it at all, to see the way you go on writing moral essays. Myself replied to me, This is a very spiteful remark of yours, and very like what Ellesmere would have said. Have I not always protested in the strongest manner against the assumption, that a

writer of moral essays must be a moral man himself? Your friend Ellesmere, in reference to this very point, remarks that if all clergymen had been Christians, there would by this time have been no science of theology. But, jesting apart, it would be a sad thing indeed if one's ideal was never to go beyond one's own infirmities. However, myself agrees with you, my dear I, so far, that it is much safer to be thought worse than better than one really is: and so blacken me as much as you like, and detract from me as much as you can, so that you do not injure my arguments or my persuasions. These I believe in, and will endeavour to carry out, just as if they had been uttered by the most irreproachable and perfect man in the world.

Maintaining this strange dialogue as stoutly as if there had been two persons instead of one in the carriage, I, or rather we (I wonder whether the editorial "we" is thus really dual, consisting of a man and his conscience) —we, I say, reached the gate of Worth-Ashton, pretty good friends with each other, and pleased with what we had thought over during our ride homewards.

CHAPTER IX.

SINCE giving an account of my last reverie, I have been abroad for a short time, which has a little interrupted my work, but I now resume it with less feeling of weariness. I seldom think much during a tour. Indeed I come out to avoid thinking. I do not come to see what can be said or thought about any place, but to see it. Nevertheless, occasionally, I make a few notes consisting of some disjointed words, sufficient to recall to me, and to me only, what were the things which made an impression upon me.

One scene of this last journey I find commemorated in this short way ; and, as it is connected with some thoughts which carry on the subjects we (my readers and I) have lately been considering, I will recall it.

I shall not tell with any preciseness where I was : for if I did so, and did it well, my countrymen would flock to see the place. Not that I grudge them seeing anything. I suppose it happens to many of us, when abroad, to feel a little ashamed now and then of these same countrymen ; but yet I often think with pleasure that even the most coarse and obtuse traveller brings back something besides self-conceit. One regrets that such opportunities are not always bestowed on minds fully able to profit by them ;

but still one hopes that the most uncultivated people cannot escape getting some little advantage from their travels ; and if they were to stay at home, they would not the less remain uncultivated people.

Such travellers, however, would not thank me at all for describing a place which might thus get into the guide-books, and then, alas ! form one more spot which they must stop to look at, while they would far rather scamper over more ground and see more well-known places with great names. And as for the people who see things for themselves, they will not pass by the spot in question without giving it a due regard.

And what a scene it is ! Across a wide extent of water lies a bridge of immense length formed of uneven planks supported upon piles. There is no railing to the bridge, so that you seem almost upon the water, and you have the sensation of being at sea, with the grandeur and without the misery (as it is to me) of such a situation. Here and there is an oratory out-jutting from the line of planks, with a narrow edging of stone round it.

It was evening when I came upon the bridge, but not so late as to prevent me from seeing well the country about me, which at intervals went down into the water in narrow tongues of land, with buildings upon them. Immediately on the heights above me were an old tower and a monastery. Near the land some giant reeds rose up from the water, but did not sway to and fro the least, for there was not a breath of wind. The only noise was a splash of the water against a jetty, or the occasional

jumping of a fish. On one of the strange-looking rocks there, which come abruptly out of the water as if asking you a question from the deep, reposed a meditative crane standing upon one leg.

On one side of the bridge the hills rise up around you evenly, and the mountains are well balanced in form: on the other side, they descend abruptly and ascend again, leaving a most picturesque gorge. Two poplars were to be seen on the lowland near this gorge.

As evening deepened, and no more peasants returning homeward from the other side saluted me with their Good-night, the houses on the surrounding hills showed like glow-worms, and all was still, save the splash of the water on the jetty.

I find that new places do not always bring new thoughts: sometimes they only intensify those which one has thought before. My mind went back to what is held by many persons to be a most prosaic subject—namely education. And I thought how education, to be of any assured worth, must continue throughout life. “Now, Sir, that your education is ended,” exclaims the parent or the guardian to many a young man whose education, in the highest sense of the word, is now about to begin. This is the mistake that we make, too, about the poor. Reading and writing will not do alone. You might as well prepare for a liberal hospitality by a good apparatus for roasting and boiling, but never putting on any viands, so that the kitchen machinery went on grinding unceasingly, with no contentment to the appetites of the hungry.

No: before we shall be able to make much of education, the highest amongst us must take larger views of it, and not suppose that it is a mere definite quantity of cultivation—defined according to the narrow limits of the fashions of the day.

If we saw this clearly, we should not be so anxious to succeed at college, at the bar, in parliament, in literature, or in any one art and science. We should perceive that there was a certain greatness of nature and acquirement to be aimed at, which we would not sacrifice to any one pursuit, worldly or artistic.

I stayed no longer on the bridge, but, ascending from it, made my way to a church which stood on the height close to the old tower. I marked in the light of the moon the slight, graceful, fantastic crosses in iron-work, telling that a peaceful population slept beside me; and I sat down upon a low, broad stone wall. Thence you might see the wide waters, and some houses whose shadows lay upon the meads which skirted the waters.

“And that is what all their ambition has come to,” I muttered to myself, turning to the crosses.

“*Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens*”

(what an epithet !)

“*Uxor : neque harum, quas colis, arborum,
Te, præter invisas cupressus,
Ulla brevem dominum sequetur.*”

These inevitable commonplace remarks mostly contain the profoundest and the sincerest thought. Yes, life may be but a poor business at the best; neverthe-

less, said I to myself, I will try to do something yet, if life is spared to me. And so, resuming the subject which I had been working at before I left home (namely, the great sin of great cities), I began to consider what I should conclude by saying, just as if I had been in my study at Worth-Ashton.

My eye wandered over the dark hills, catching every now and then the glow-worm light which came from some house or cottage perched up there. I pictured to myself the daughter of one of these homes carried off to some great town, soon to be lost there in its squalid suburbs, like beautiful, spoilt fruit, swept away with garbage into the common kennel. The girl, perhaps, is much to blame herself; for we must admit that the fault is not always on one side, and we must not suffer any sickly sentiment to darken truth and justice. Yes—she may be much to blame; but, surely, the wiser creature, man, is more so. Seduction is such a poor transaction. There was a time, it was one of the basest times the world has ever seen, when seduction was thought a fine and clever thing; but now who does not see that to delude a woman, a creature easily to be deluded, especially through its affections, is a slight, unworthy transaction, and, but for its dire consequences, would be ludicrous; like cheating a child at cards? But when you add to this that in many a case, desertion follows so rapidly upon seduction as almost to appear as if they had been planned together, then the smallness of the transaction is absolutely lost in the consideration of its baseness.

However, say what we will, there will often be seductions ; and it would be a great point gained, if desertion should be looked upon with greater severity. This brings me at once to the subject of what are called illegitimate children.

Now, duties are very often very difficult things to apprehend rightly. As everything is ultimately referred to duty, and as a great many things in this world are very dubious, it is manifest that duties are often very dubious likewise. There are not only clear, but dim and shadowy duties, if I may so express them, which are very perplexing, and occupy much of a man's time and thought. Often we find that what we supposed to be a duty was anything but a duty. The great persecutors for opinion have probably found that out now ; and, indeed, on earth, we often discover that what we supposed to be a duty, and performed with earnest diligence, was a great delusion. Under these circumstances, it does seem to me that when we have before us an undoubted duty, one of those things which come under the axioms of morality, we can hardly lay too much stress on the performance of that. It is like what we ought to do in our charities, I think. Charity is so difficult and perplexed a thing, that when a man has got hold of a clearly good charity which he can carry out, he had better do that thoroughly than dissipate his resources, mental and physical, in any efforts of a dubious tendency.

Now, I suppose, there are few things clearer to the human mind,

“ To saint, to savage, and to sage,”

than that a father owes duties to his child. The dullest savages have seen that. Even Lacedæmonians, if they put off individual fatherhood, only did so by throwing it upon the community. How can a man, for a moment, imagine that any difference of rank (a mere earthly arrangement) between the mother of his child and himself can absolve him from paternal duties? I am lost in astonishment at the notion. And then imagine a man, performing all manner of minor duties, neglecting this first one the while. I always fancy that we may be surrounded by spiritual powers. Now, think what a horrible mockery it must seem to them, when they behold a man going to charity dinners, busying himself about flannel for the poor, jabbering about education at public meetings, immersed in different forms and ceremonies of religion, or raging against such things, because it is his duty, as he tells you; and at the door holding a link, or perhaps at that moment bringing home the produce of small thefts in a neighbouring narrow alley is his own child, a pinched-up, haggard, outcast, cunning-looking little thing. Throw down, man, the flannel and the soap and the education and the Popery and Protestantism, and go up that narrow alley and tend your child: do not heap that palpably unjust burden on the back of a world which has enough at all times of its own to bear. If you cannot find your own child, adopt two others in its place, and let your care for them be a sort of sin-offering. These are indignant words, but not more so than is right, I do believe, and I will not suppress one of them.

I am not ignorant of the difficulty of doing as I would have a man do in such a case. I do not write as a hermit or a clergyman, but as a man who thinks he knows something of the world. To own to immorality, to have that fair respectability spotted which we all value so much, and which is valuable, is no slight effort. A man who would beard a lion in his den, will shrink from doing what he ought to do, lest in so doing his neighbours should say unpleasant words about him behind his back. And yet there have been respectable men who have worn beards and strange hats which their neighbours did not wear; a more daring thing, perhaps, than owning to any immorality and endeavouring to repair it.

There are men who have secretly supported the burden of an illegitimate family; these at least are far better men than those who have joined the world in ignoring the existence of those they were bound to know of and to succour. Great kings, who can afford to set aside conventionality, before whom "nice custom curtseys," have boldly taken charge of their illegitimate children, and the world has not thought the worse of them for that, whatever it may justly have thought of the rest of their proceedings.

Some may reply, All this acknowledgment is encouragement. I say not. I say it holds before a person those duties, the general forgetfulness of which encourages to immorality. But, really, fine questions of general morality ought to be of second-rate importance to a man who is neglecting his first duties.

Is it not so? I said, looking round upon the thin shadows cast by the crosses over the graves. Silent population (any one of whom, the meanest, could now tell us more, mayhap, than all the wise men and doctors of this earth), silent population, is it not so? But none answered, unless a sigh of the breeze which now stole over the churchyard was the expression of one of those subtle chords of sympathy, rarely heard, still more rarely appreciated, which, perhaps, bring animate, and what we call inanimate, nature into secret, strange communion.

I went down again upon the bridge, looked up at the solemn sky, for the moon was clouded now, and beneath me at the dim waters, being able to discern naught else: and still with some regard to what I had been thinking of in the churchyard, hoped that, in a future state at least, we might have some opportunity of loving and making our peace with those whom we have wronged here, and of seeing that our wrong, overruled by infinite goodness, has not wrought all the injury which there was in it to do.

So I walked on, having those dim apprehensions and undefined feelings which are yet, perhaps, the unfashioned substance of our sincerest and most exact afterthought, until darkness and the cold and the thought of to-morrow's journey drove me homeward—the home so emblematical for man in his pilgrimage—the home of an inn.

CHAPTER X.

SO varied, extensive, and pervading are human distresses, sorrows, shortcomings, miseries, and misadventures, that a chapter of aid or consolation never comes amiss, I think. There is a pitiless, pelting rain this morning ; heavily against my study windows drives the south-western gale ; and altogether it is a very fit day for working at such a chapter. The in-door comforts which enable one to resist with composure, nay even to welcome, this outward conflict and hubbub, are like the plans and resources provided by philosophy and religion, to meet the various calamities driven against the soul in its passage through this stormy world. The books which surround me have been found an equal resource in both respects, both against the weather from without and from within, against physical and mental storms : and, if it might be so, I would pass on to others the comfort which a seasonable word has often brought to me.

If I were to look round these shelves, what a host of well-loved names would rise up, as those who have said brave or wise words to comfort and aid their brethren in adversity. It seems as if little remained to be said ; but in truth there is always waste land in the human heart to be tilled.

The first thing which occurs to me is, that in bearing misfortune and vexation, as in overcoming temptation, there is a certain confidence which had better be put aside. This confidence sometimes results from a faith in reason, or rather a faith in our being exactly amenable to reason. For instance, it is some time before a man ceases to have a full belief in his own powers of accomplishing by direct means the absolute rule in his mind. If he is convinced of a thing, he says to himself, of course he will act accordingly. It astonishes him to hear of men—great men—who could not overcome, or found the greatest difficulty in overcoming, some small habit. Indeed, according to his brave imaginings, he intends always to overcome terrors and temptations, not merely to avoid them. Such is a very juvenile though a very natural mode of thinking. It requires a good many fallings in the mire, before a man finds that his own mind, temperament, and faculties, are things which will give him as much or more trouble to manage, than his affairs, or his family, or than the whole world besides.

But as a man learns certain rules of health, so that it is said that at forty he is either a fool or a physician, so again, in dealing with the affections of the mind, there comes a skill which is not to be despised: and a man finds that the evil he cannot master he can ignore, the care he cannot efface he can elude, the felicity he cannot accomplish he can weigh and understand, and so reduce it from the size it would occupy in his imagination to its proper and reasonable limits. At last even sensitive

people learn to suffer less from sensitiveness ; not that it grows dull by age, but that they learn to manage it better.

As a sound preparation for consolation of various kinds, I would begin, not by wilfully magnifying evils, but by showing their true proportions, which no doubt makes them seem larger than the imagination of the young, mistaught by many unsound fictions, pictures them to be. But nothing can be better than the truth. In its hand are all earthly and all heavenly consolations. As an instance of what I mean, there is a common fancy that an untoward event generally comes and goes with considerable rapidity—and there an end ; whereas it is very often a long-continued process. You do not fall sheer down a precipice, but go tumbling by degrees, drinking in the full measure of danger and horror, catching at bushes here and there, now imagining for a moment that you have found security on some projecting ledge, and then finding the ground crumbling under you ; and so you fall onwards till you reach the lowest level. The above is rather a strong image, but it may convey what I intend.

To illustrate it in practice—most men who have lived any time in the world, unless they have been the very minions of fortune (in which case, by the way, they are not much to be envied), have vexations of considerable standing—long lawsuits, disastrous adventures, an ill-conducted child, or some other terrible relative, a deplorable shame, often such a mingled tissue of fault and misfortune, that they cannot pity themselves sufficiently

for blame at their folly ; and they return from thinking over the folly to grieving over the ill-luck (as they call it) which brought out the folly so remarkably on that particular occasion.

Such a course of things requiring time for its development, can hardly fail to exercise in vexation all the moods and faculties of a man. A statesman does not perhaps work, intellectually speaking, harder than a lawyer in great practice ; but the cares of the latter are cares which begin and end with the day ; not long lines of policy which require time and protracted care on one subject to work out, and where failure often comes by slow degrees.

Now, then, for the attempt at aid or consolation in such a case. Suppose the course of events I have spoken of to be one of failure and vexation—realised, or about to be so, to use an American phrase, and a very good one. A wise man (but that word “wise” is hardly a fit adjective to put before “man,” it would be better to say, a man well-read in the heart) sees when he has suffered enough from these lengthened trains of evils, when he has exhausted the instruction from them ; and though from time to time he may revert to them, as new views or new circumstances occur, enabling him to look down from a fresh height, as it were, on these long, dreary, disastrous passages of his life, yet he resolves substantially to have done with them ; and when he finds them invading his mind and memory, adroitly he contrives at once to occupy it with something else.

With his wisdom of this world, Napoleon, no doubt, took care not to let his Russian campaign press fatally upon his recollections.

Another way for a man in such a case is to quote these disasters fearlessly to himself, and sometimes to others, as dear-bought bits of experience, now possessions: bought, it is true, at a most extravagant price, but still a little property, far better than nothing.

There is great humility in such plans as the above; the man who adopts them has found out, or at least he thoroughly suspects, his own weakness, and is willing to avail himself of any fair advantage to fight with the numerous enemies that surround him. Like a wise commander, he looks about for the slightest rising ground.

The same adroitness and practical wisdom may be manifested, not only in thought but in action. A friend of mine who had to attend a series of interviews, in which business was discussed of much vexation to him, and where he had to undergo, justly, much contumely, discovered that the occasions when he gave way to temper and behaved unwisely, were those on which he rode on a tiresome horse to the place of business. This is very natural: his nerves were a little ruffled in managing the unruly quadruped; his powers a little impaired; his composure slightly broken through to begin with: and, where things are nicely balanced, this slight disturbance of equanimity might turn the scale. Afterwards he took care to go to the place of these interviews always in the

easiest manner, and noted the good effect of this change. How trivial such an anecdote will seem, except to those who know the world well, and have seen how important small things may be when they happen to be brought into the same narrow compass of affairs with great ones !

But now, to pass to other subjects of human distress, and first among them, to all that is suffered from obloquy.

In bearing obloquy it may be noted, by way of consolation, that the world is always correcting its opinions ; that—except amongst your particular friends and relations, who have, perhaps, taken up a most erroneous view of your character, and, in the pride of a little knowledge, will never let it go—the general body of opinion is very fluent, and, at last, everything has a hearing. I have a private suspicion of my own, that some of those Roman emperors we read of have been maligned a little. Somebody else, perhaps, has the same notion ; if it is a just one, it will yet be investigated, and what there is true in it be sifted out.

It is certainly a long time to wait, for ages, to have an unjust opinion of you corrected ; but if fame is worth anything at all, then there is a consolation in thinking that eventually you have a chance of being fairly dealt with.

By way of comfort in bearing calumny, it may be observed that calumny does not originate in the way ordinarily supposed ; that there is rarely any such thing as a system of active, well-regulated, well-aimed calumny, arising out of malice prepense ; but that far more often

it has its source in honest ignorance, mean-mindedness, or absolute mistake. It is to be viewed, therefore, in the light of a misfortune, rather than in that of a persecution.

Any man of many transactions can hardly expect to go through life without being subject to one or two very severe calumnies. Amongst these many transactions, some few will be with very ill-conditioned people, with very ignorant people, or perhaps with monomaniacs (and much less account is taken of them than ought to be); and he cannot expect, therefore, but that some narrative of a calumnious kind will have its origin in one of these transactions. It may then be fanned by any accidental breeze of malice or ill-fortune, and become a very serious element of mischief to him. Such a thing is to be looked upon as pure misfortune coming in the ordinary course of events; and the way of treating it is to deal with it as calmly and philosophically as with any other misfortune. As some one has said, the mud will rub off when it is dry, and not before. The drying will not always come in the calumniated man's time, unless in favourable seasons, which he cannot command. It is not wise, however, to be very impatient to justify one's self; and, altogether, too much stress should not be laid upon calumny by the calumniated, else their serious work will be for ever interrupted; and they should remember that it is not so much their business to explain to others all they do, as to be sure that it will bear explanation and satisfy themselves.

When I was in the habit of seeing something of official

life, I used to wonder that a great department suffered itself to be calumniated, and made no sign ; but older and wiser heads than mine soon convinced me that their business did not admit of their confuting every idle and erroneous statement that was made about them, and that they were mainly to answer to those persons who had authority to question them. The same judicious maxim applies also to private life.

Not far removed from calumny, and often leading up to it, is injurious comment on people's conduct ; which, when addressed or repeated to them, or imagined by them, is apt to vex them sorely. But really if it were considered how utterly incompetent men are to talk of the conduct of others, as they do, the talkers would often be silenced at once, and the sufferers as readily consoled. In the first place, how imperfect is our knowledge of our neighbour's circumstances. You suppose a man rich, and he is poor ; or rich, but with perils, claims, and responsibilities of which you know nothing ; you suppose him healthy, and he is tortured by some internal disease ; you suppose him unhappy in his domestic relations, and he is most felicitous ; or, on the other hand, you suppose him lapped in the loving regards of his family, and all the while he has a wretched, contentious home ; you suppose him a man of leisure, and he is cumbered with cares, duties, labours, and endeavours, of which you have not the slightest conception—what is your comment on this man's conduct worth ? Then, if we observe the

difference of men's natures, and consider the want of imagination in most men which confines them to the just appreciation of those natures only which are like their own, how much this complicates the question. Probably the difference of temperament amongst men is as great as that amongst the different species of animals—as between that, for instance, of the lively squirrel and the solemn crane. Now, if only from this difference between them, the squirrel would be a bad judge of the felicity, or generosity, or the domestic conduct, of the crane.

Probably when we are thinking or talking of a person, we recall some visual image of that person. I have thought what an instructive thing it would be, if under some magic influence, like that, for example, which would construct a "palace of truth," it were arranged that as we gave out our comments on the character or conduct of any person, this image on the retina of memory should change according to the truth, or rather the want of it, in our remarks. Gradually, feature after feature would steal away till we gazed at nonentity; or, we should find another image glide into the field of view, somebody we had never seen; perhaps, but to whom the comments we were uttering really did apply.

Now, the sufferers from injurious and unjust comment might treat the whole thing as one which lacked reality. The blame itself is often good enough, well-compacted, forcible, having an appearance of justice—but withal no foundation in real circumstances, so that it is only good, if you may say so, in a literary sense, as good fiction,

but having no groundwork in real life. How little ought a thoughtful man to be long vexed at such stuff, immaterial in every sense.

Besides, none of the great teachers have taught us, that to be reviled is any signal misfortune ; and there has been One, the greatest, who has pronounced it to be fraught with blessing.

In bearing neglect, the next evil to calumny, and a sort of disengaged shadow of it, many aids may be given to those who will be content to take them. No doubt neglect is hard to bear for one who feels that he ought not to be neglected. But where this is justly felt, the neglect may generally be traced up to some source which is not, necessarily, a painful one. A man will not condescend to use certain means, and yet would have what those means alone, or best, can give him ; or he insists, in his mental cogitations, upon possessing that which could hardly be got except with the aid of certain advantages, joined to merit, which advantages, whether wisely or not, Nature or Fortune has denied him. Having one stout friend (as Bacon, before quoted, has noticed), what will it not do for a man ? There are certain things he cannot say for himself. If he says them, they turn into shame, vain glory, and mischief, instead of aid and honour to him. Well he has no friend to back him at the right time, how can he get those advantages which such a friend could gracefully obtain for him ? Frequently, perhaps most frequently, the friend in question comes forward in the shape of a relation who has a direct

interest in the fortunes of the man he puts forward. This is called having good connections. Any neglected man of merit ought not to suffer himself to be quite disheartened because he was not born with such relations. Neither were the poor men who dig in the fields.

But neglect is only one phase of what man hates more, and suffers more from, than almost anything else—namely, injustice. His sensitiveness in this respect is very remarkable. A little wrong outweighs a great injury. Indeed, the things are not to be weighed in the same scales, are practically incommensurable. The sea invades a man's estate, and retires carrying away land and crops, leaving sand where there was alluvial soil : it is a misfortune ; and he has a dull sense of sorrow and vexation if the loss is one of magnitude. But the poor blind elements meant no harm, or if he thinks they were guided, he knows it was by One whose chastisements must be blessings.

Again, suppose him to have spent much money in riotous living. Well, he thinks of this with shame, especially when some good comes in his way to do, and he sees what he might have done with the squandered resources. Still there was something for his money. He was not cheated ; he was mistaken.

But observe the same man on looking over a bill of costs : where, often, for many items together, it is only wrong-doing requiring to be paid, and he feels that when he pays it, he is helping to support a vicious system of things. It is not well to be of his family circle on the

day when he settles those accounts, unless he is one of those rare and generous creatures who do not mitigate their own misfortunes by unkindness to those with whom they live. No liberality of nature will suffice to soothe his mind. It is not a question of liberality. The same man who, with Luther, would say to his wife, "Why did we not give the silver cup to that poor man as we had no money?" will haggle over an unjust or unsatisfactory payment from morning till night. But it is a question of wisdom and experience: for a wise and well-informed man will see what must almost inevitably be the evil results of the particular form of laws he lives under (for codes are the doings of very imperfect creatures with a limited range of circumstances before them), and he does not expect to go into the most vexed and troublous part of human affairs, and come out with smooth countenance and unruffled garments. Neither will such a man be disposed to imagine that he is worse off than others, or has worse people to deal with.

And the same thing is to be said of injustice generally. You often hear a man making the somewhat simple complaint, that he only wants justice. Only justice! why justice requires time, insight, and goodness: and you demand this in each case of the many hundreds that occur to you in the course of a year in which your fellow-beings have some dealings with you. No—justice! look not for it till you are in a state of being for which you will hardly say that you are yet quite fit. In truth, the consideration of what a world of misunderstanding, haste,

blindness, passion, indolence, and private interest we are in the thick of (perhaps the beauty of it as a world of trial) would go some little way to cure a man from vexing the depths of his soul, because he suffers from extortion, misrepresentation, neglect, or injustice of any kind. He is on earth : and men are unjust to him. How ludicrous the complaint !

Perhaps the wrongs we endure from unjust treatment would be easier to bear, if our notions of justice were modified a little. For my part, instead of picturing her, sword in hand, apparently engaged in blindly weighing out small groceries—a figure that would better denote the goddess Fortune, as it seems to me—I imagine Justice travelling swiftly round about the earth, diffusing a mild effluence of light like that of a polar night, but followed not by her own attendants, but by the ungainly shadows of all evil things, envy and prejudice, indolence and selfishness, her enemies ; and these shadows lay themselves down before her in their malice, and love to intercept her light. The aspect of a good man scares them partially away, and then her light lies in great broad spaces on the mead : with most of us, it is chequered like the sunshine under trees ; and there are poor creatures in whose presence all the evil shadows descend, leaving but a streak of light here and a spot there, where the hideous shadows do not quite fit in together. Happily, however, all these shadows are mortal, and as they die away, dark miserable places come into light and

life again, and truth returns to them as her abodes for ever.

Descending from these flights about justice to the more prosaic parts of the subject, I may notice, that mean misfortunes are often the most difficult to bear. There is no instrument of philosophy small enough to take them up and deal with them. A long career of small anxieties is also very hard to bear.

One thing which often maintains these vexations in full force, is the shame of owning to our want of wisdom in the first instance. A man, playing in imagination his part in life, always, like the story-books, makes his hero successful in the end : and, therefore, in real life, he is immensely disturbed and humiliated at finding that such is the devilry of circumstances, that if he only gives a little inlet to mischance by folly or incautiousness of any kind, he is sometimes invaded by a flood of evil.

He bears this in secret, struggling with all his might and eating his own heart, as it were, rather than own to the folly he committed at first. Nothing less will satisfy him than to retrieve the whole misfortune, and cancel by success his first error. Thus we come to one more instance of the truth that Pride applies the scourge more frequently and with far heavier hand than Penitence ; with the hand, in fact, of another.

As regards the "career of small anxieties," which I spoke of above, one great art of managing with them, is to cease thinking about them just at that point where

thought becomes morbid. It will not do to say that such anxieties may not demand some thought, and occasionally much thought. But there comes a time when thought is wasted upon these anxieties; when you find yourself in your thoughts going over the same ground again and again to no purpose, deepening annoyance instead of enlarging insight and providing remedy. Then the thing would be to be able to speak to these fretting little cares, like Lord Burleigh to his gown of state, when he took it off for the night, "Lie there, Lord Treasurer."

It must be remembered though that his cares, assured as he was of his mistress's favour, were for the most part mere business cares, and did not exactly correspond with the small anxieties which I was speaking of. These are very hard, I suspect, to dismiss. Perhaps the best way of getting rid of them is not to attempt too much at once, but at least to change the cares, so as not to let one set prey upon the mind and make it become morbid—just as Newton, unable to go abruptly from his high, absorbing thoughts to what most men would consider recreation, merely adopted a change of study, and found his relief therein.

There is often a very keen annoyance suffered by sensitive and high-minded people, arising from dissatisfaction with their own work. I should be very sorry to say anything that would seem like encouragement to slight or unconscientious working, but to the anxious, truth-seeking, high-minded, fastidious man, I would sometimes

venture to say, "My good friend, if we could work out our ideal, we should be angels. There is eternity to do it in. But now come down from your pedestal, and do not overfret yourself, because your hand, or your mind, or your soul, will not fulfil all that you would have it. There have been men before you, and probably will come others after you, whose deeds, however much approved of by the general voice, seemed, or will seem, to the men themselves little better than a caricature of their aspirations."

How much, by the way, accomplishments of various kinds would come in to help men to get rid of overriding small cares and petty anxieties. These accomplishments mostly appeal to another world of thought and feeling than that in which the little troubles were bred. The studious, the busy, and the sorrowful might find in art a change of thought which nothing else, at least of worldly things, could give them. And the accomplishments I mean would be of use on occasions when there is no need, and where it is scarcely fitting to summon forth the solemn aid of religion or philosophy. Not that I would have such aid far distant from any mind, or on any occasion : for there is a comfort and a sobriety of mind to be gained from the great topics of consolation which nothing else can surely give.

In considering various forms of unhappiness, which has been the business of this chapter, for the purpose of providing some small aids and consolations, one

form has occurred to me which is not uncommon, I imagine.

It is where an almost infinite regret enters the mind at some happiness having been missed which in imagination seems the one possible present good to the person indulging the imagination : and the men or women in this sad case go on all their days mourning or fretting for want of that imagined felicity. This must often occur in the midst of great seeming prosperity, which deepens the vexation, and gives an air of especial mockery to it.

To find consolation for this state of mind may not be easy ; still there are medicaments even for it. Imagine the happiness in question gained, fond dreamer ; do you not already see some diminution of the happiness itself ? —it will only be from lack of imagination if you do not —but at any rate do you not at least perceive how many fears such happiness would throw you open to ? “ Ah, Davy,” said Johnson to Garrick, after going over his new house and looking at the fine things there, “ these are the things that make a deathbed terrible.”

Every felicity, indeed, as well as wife and children, is a hostage to Fortune.

Lastly, there is to be said of all suffering that it is experience. I have forgotten in whose life it is to be found, but there is some man who went out of his way to provide himself with every form of human misery which he could get at. I do not, myself, see any occasion for any man's going out of the way to provide misfortune for

himself. Like an eminent physician he might stay at home, and find almost every form of human misery knocking at his door. But still I understand what this chivalrous inquirer meant, who sought to taste all suffering for the sake of the experience it would give him.

There is this admirable commonplace, too, which, from long habit of being introduced in such discourses, wishes to come in before I conclude ; namely, that infelicities of various kinds belong to the state here below. Who are we that we should not take our share ? See the slight amount of personal happiness requisite to go on with. In noisome dungeons, subject to studied tortures, in abject and shiftY poverty, after consummate shame, upon tremendous change of fortune, in the profoundest desolation of mind and soul, in forced companionship with all that is unlovely and uncongenial, men, persevering nobly, live on, and live through it all. The mind, like water, as described in that beautiful passage in *Metastasio*, which I will transcribe below, passes through all states, till it shall be united to what it is ever seeking. The very loneliness of man here is the greatest proof, to my mind, of a God.

“ L'onda dal mar divisa
Bagna la valle e'l monte ;
Va passeggiara
In fiume,
Va prigioniera
In fonte,
Mormora sempre e geme,
Fin che non torna al mar ;

Al mar dov' ella nacque,
Dove acquistò gli umori,
Dove da' lunghi errori
Spera di riposar."

Such were my thoughts this wet day, which I had made up my mind was to be a dreary day throughout ; but I had hardly come to the end of what I had to say, when (may it be a good omen that the chapter itself may bring some cheer to some one in distress) the sun peeped out, the drops of rain upon the leaves glistened in the sunshine like afflictions beautified by heavenly thoughts, and all Nature invited me out to enjoy the gladness of her aspect, more glad by contrast with her former friendly gloom.

CHAPTER XI.

THE sun came out brilliantly this morning. To be sure, there was a chilliness in the air ; but if you walked about with vigour, and said it was a charming morning, it gradually became so. An eccentric friend of mine, of the Johnsonian school, maintains that all kinds of weather may be treated in a similar manner, and says, that if a man will go out in the rain without any defence and pretend to know nothing about the showers, the rain will cease for him, each drop exclaiming, "It is no use raining upon that man, he does not mind it." Whether my friend has a moral meaning to this fable of his, I do not know : and, indeed, it is difficult to sound the depths of some men's humour, the deepest part of their nature.

As I walked up and down under the shelter of a wall, so that I might have the full benefit of the sun's rays, I could not help thinking that the sun had been very little worshipped by idolaters. In fact, he is too manifest a benefactor to be much idolised. Moreover, what the natural man likes to worship, is some ugly little idol, an incarnation of one or other of his own bad passions. I suppose the real explanation is, that the form of the sun being a simple one, essentially belonging to

the inanimate world, provoked no desire to worship, and left no room for sufficient mystery. So, after all, it is perhaps a proof of the craving imagination of mankind that the sun has had, comparatively speaking, but few worshippers, while an ungainly stone, or a thing with many hands and legs, has enjoyed the tenderest adoration.

Then I thought if our senses were finer, what an exquisite sight it would be to behold all the inanimate world turning gently to the sun each day; a fact which we only perceive in the results of such fond looks for many years, as exhibited in the growth of trees; whereas, if our senses were more delicately apprehensive, we might see every leaf, bud, and twig making its little way towards the light, and all nature, like one sunflower, bending slightly forwards in a supplicating attitude to the sun.

Warming with the subject I exclaimed, This is quite an Italian sky—rather home-made, was the disparaging second thought. In such a mood it was very natural to think of foreign travel. I looked at the fig-trees against the wall, and felt that they must be rather disgusted at the climate which needed such a position for them. However, said I, it is only what the greatest men have had to endure, to live in an uncongenial clime, and to bring forth fruit with painful culture and under most adverse circumstances; so you must not complain, though you are nailed up against the wall. On went my mind to a particular fig-tree near Cordova, from thence down the Guadalquivir; when I saw again the beautiful birds come out of the sandy banks of the river; and in truth,

I was in a full career of travel, when it occurred to me that I had often thought many things about travelling, and that it might be useful to put them together. So, walking up and down, like a peripatetic philosopher, only with no disciples (which, by the way, is a safer thing for the discovery of truth), I put into some order the following remarks on travel.

A journey has often been compared to a life. I suppose that in any comparison so frequently used there must be some aptitude ; but it does not strike me. Any one day is like a life, is indeed an epitome of it : morning, noon, evening, awaking and going to sleep, have all the closest analogy with the progress of a life. But a journey is often very dissimilar to a life. In travelling, for instance for pleasure, you go out with much hope of delight : the delight is partly realised ; but there is much that is untoward, and which, at the time, prevents a thorough enjoyment and appreciation of what you do see. You return with joy, and the journey is afterwards stored up in the memory as a complete pleasure ; all the mishaps being put into what the Dutch call "the forget book," or only remembered as interesting incidents. Clearly, one of the main delights is in the recollection. Now, we cannot venture to say whether that will be the case with the journey of life. There does not appear much promise of that.

I took a turn up and down the garden, and thought over that last suggestion, which is a very serious one. Soon, however, I returned to the subject of travelling.

Yes, I said to myself, certainly there is great pleasure in coming back after a tour (which, by the way, may be another great difference between these journeys and the journey of life); at least I know I am always glad to come back to that great, silent, unexpecting people to whom I belong—upon whose dominions the sun never sets, who are very powerful and somewhat dull; free as far as constitutions and forms of government go, but as slavish as any other nation to the great tyrants, custom and public opinion: a people, indeed, who do not enjoy any exuberant felicity, but who have humour enough to see their faults and shortcomings, which is some alleviation.

But to descend more to particulars about travelling. The first thing is in the preparation for it; the mental preparation, I mean. In this preparation lies some of the greatest utility and of the greatest pleasure connected with travelling. And without this preparation what a small thing travel would be! What is it to see some tomb, when the name of the inmate is merely a pompous sound—the name of an unknown king, duke, or emperor—compared with what it is to see the tomb of one whose fortunes you have studied, who is a favourite with you, who represents yourself or what you would be, whose very name makes your blood stir? The same thing, of course, applies in travel, to knowledge of the arts, sciences, and manufactures. Knowledge is the best excitement and the truest reward for travel—at once the means and the end. A dignified and intelligent curiosity, how much it

differs from mere inane lion-hunting : where the ignorant traveller gapes at wonders which the guides know far more about than he does.

With regard to the mode of travelling, it is curious to compare the ancient with the modern ; the free yet stately way of the former, the methodised yet undignified way of the latter. Imagine a traveller in former days setting off from the ancestral mansion leisurely, on horse-back. Within ten miles there might be an adventure ; and throughout the journey, which had not been much cleared up by the accounts of former travellers, there must have been a constant feeling of doubt as to what was to happen next, and a consequent excitement a little like the feeling of a great discoverer in unknown lands seeking after the kingdom of Prester John, the El Dorado, or the fountain of perpetual youth ; and not being certain any day that he might not come upon one of these wonders.

I think it is possible to combine, occasionally, the advantages of modern and ancient travelling, especially for the vigorous and healthy.

In the plans and modes of travelling, the question of companionship comes first. And, by the way, what a hint it might give many a young man of the difficulties to be conquered in domestic companionship, when he finds how hard it is to agree with his fellows in travel for a few short weeks. All the difficulties attendant upon companionship occur in this case of travelling. Indeed,

the first question is, whether you should journey alone, solitary and unmolested ; or with one other, when the want of profound sympathy and the wish to quarrel will be very painful ; or with two or three, when the quarrelling can better break out and the companions separate into factions. The advantages and disadvantages are so nearly equivalent that the traveller will probably condemn and regret whichever course he takes, and, therefore, may take any one without much concern. To the very serious reader I may mention that the above description is not given quite in earnest, but it points to what are some of the prominent dangers of companionship. Really it is disgraceful that men are so ill-taught and unprepared for social life as they are, often turning their best energies, their acquisitions, and their special advantages into means of annoyance to those with whom they live. Some day it will be found out that to bring up a man with a genial nature, a good temper, and a happy form of mind, is a greater effort than to perfect him in much knowledge and many accomplishments. Then we might have that tolerance of other people's pursuits, that absence of disputatiousness, and that freedom from small fussiness, which would render a companion a certain gain. It will not be desirable, however, to wait till that period before we begin our travels.

The advantages of travel are very various and very numerous. I have already put the knowledge to be

gained as one of them. But this is for the young and the unworn. A far greater advantage is in the repose of mind which travelling often gives, where nothing else could. It seems rather hard, though, that all our boasted philosophy cannot do what a little change of place so easily affects. It is by no magical property, however, that travelling does this. It is merely that by this change things assume their right proportions. The nightmares of care and trouble cease to weigh as if they were the only things of weight in the world.

I know one who finds somewhat of the same advantage in looking at the stars. He says, it suggests a welcome change of country. Indeed, he maintains that the aspect of these glorious worlds might somewhat comfort a man even under remorse.

Again, a man's own land is a serious place to him, or at least has a possible seriousness about it, which is like a cloud that may at any moment come over the spot he is occupying.

There he has known the sweetness and the bitterness of early loves, early friendships. There, mayhap, he has suffered one of those vast bereavements which was like a tearing away of a part of his own soul : when he thought each noise in the house, hearing noises that he never heard before, must be something they were doing in the room—the room—where lay all that was mortal of some one inexpressibly dear to him ; when he awoke morning after morning to struggle with a grief which seemed as

new, as appalling, and as large as on the first day ; which indeed, being part of himself and thus partaking of his renovated powers, rose equipped with what rest, or alacrity, sleep had given him ; and sank, unconquered, only when he was too wearied in body and mind to attend to it, or to anything.

The places where he has felt such sorrows may be the dearest in the world to him, may be sure to win him back to them ; but they cannot always be regarded in that easy, disengaged way which is necessary for perfect recreation.

This, then, is one of the advantages of travel, that we come upon new ground, which we tread lightly, which is free from associations that claim too deep and constant an interest from us ; and, not resting long in any one place, but travelling onwards, we maintain that desirable lightness of mind : we are spectators, having for the time no duties, no ties, no associations, no responsibilities ; nothing to do but to look on, and look fairly.

Another of the great advantages of travel lies in what you learn from your companions : not merely from those you set out with, or so much from them, as from those whom you are thrown together with on the journey. I reckon this advantage to be so great, that I should be inclined to say, that you often get more from your companions in travel than from all you come to see.

People imagine they are not known, and that they shall never meet again with the same company (which is very likely so) ; they are free for the time from the

trammels of their business, profession, or calling; the marks of the harness begin to wear out; and altogether they talk more like men than slaves with their several functions hanging like collars round their necks. An ordinary man on travel will sometimes talk like a great imaginative man at home, for such are never utterly enslaved by their functions.

Then the diversities of character you meet with instruct and delight you. The variety in language, dress, behaviour, religious ceremonies, mode of life, amusement, arts, climate, government, lays hold of your attention, and takes you out of the wheel-tracks of your everyday cares. He must, indeed, be either an angel of constancy and perseverance, or a wonderfully obtuse Caliban of a man, who, amidst all this change, can maintain his private griefs or vexations exactly in the same place they held in his heart while he was packing for his journey.

The change of language is alone a great delight. You pass along, living only with gentlemen and scholars, for you rarely detect what is vulgar, or inept, in the talk around you. Children's talk in another language is not childish to you; and, indeed, everything is literature, from the announcement at a railway station to the advertisements in a newspaper. Read the Bible in another tongue; and you will perhaps find a beauty in it you have not thoroughly appreciated for years before.

As regards the enjoyments of travel, I should be sorry to say anything pedantic about them. They must

vary so much according to the nature of the individual. In my view, they are to be found in the chance delights rather than in the official part of travelling. I go through a picture-gallery, enjoying with instructed and well-regulated satisfaction all the things I ought to enjoy. Down in the recesses of my mind, not communicated perhaps to any of my companions, is a secret hope that the room I see in the distance is really the last in the building, and that I shall have to go through no more. It is a warm day, and, stepping out upon a balcony for a moment, I see a young girl carefully helping her infirm mother out of church and playfully insisting on carrying the market burdens of both, far too heavy for her little self. I watch the pair to the corner of the street, and then turn back to see the pictures which must be seen. But the pictures will fade from my memory sooner than this little scene which I saw from the balcony. I have put that by for my private gallery. Doubtless, we need not leave our own country to see much that is most beautiful in nature and in conduct; but we are often far too much engaged, and too unobservant, to see it.

Then there is the new climate. How exquisite the mere sensation of warmth is to many persons! Then there is the stroll in the market-place, or the sight of the harbour, or the procession, or the guard-house—in short, the aspect of all those ordinary, but, in a strange country, unfamiliar things which, happily, no hand-book need dilate upon, or even point out, but which men are perverse enough to like all the better for that.

The benefits which arise from making the inhabitants of different nations acquainted with one another may be considerable. How many things there are to be learnt on both sides : and how slow men are in copying the good from each other. An evil custom or a dubious one, or a disease, mental, moral, or physical, how rapidly it spreads over the earth ! Evil is winged. How slowly any contrivance for cleanliness, or decorum, or good order, makes its way. If it were not that good by its nature is enduring, and evil by its nature transitory, there would be but little chance for the welfare of the world.

In contemplating different nations, the traveller learns that their differences are very great, and yet how small when compared with their resemblances. That intensity of dislike which arises at these small differences, and which even the most philosophical minds are apt at times to feel, is a great proof of the tyrannous nature of the human heart, which would have every other creature cut out exactly after its own pattern.

One of the things to be most noted by an Englishman in travelling, is the remarkable difference, as it seems to me, between our own and other nations in the amusements of the people. We are the people who have sent out our efforts to the uttermost parts of the earth, and yet a great deal of our own life at home is very barren and uncultivated. When I have been watching the gamesomeness of other people, it has often saddened me to think of the poverty of resources in my own

country in that way. Shows alone will not do. Pictures are good in their way, but what is wanted is something in which people themselves are engaged. Indeed, more persons are amused, and rightly so, in playing at bowls than in looking at Raphaels, Murillos, or Titians. Those who are most amused, if one may use such a word, in contemplating these great works, are those in whom the works produce a secret feeling of power to create the like—I do not say, like pictures or even like works of art, but something great, if only great destruction—in fact, where the works elicit the sympathy of kindred genius. But for the amusements of the people, something on a very broad and general basis must be sought for.

Returning, however, to the special subject of travelling, which I am now considering, it is worth notice that there is no occasion for being excessively emulous, or haste-bitten, in travelling any more than in other occupations of life. Let no truly observant man feel the least envious, or disconcerted, when he hears others talk familiarly of cities which are dreamland to him, the names of which are poetry in his mind. Many of these men never have seen, and never can see anything, as he can see it. The wise do not hurry without good reason. A judicious traveller tells me that he once went to see one of the greatest wonders of the world. He gazed and gazed, each minute saw more, and might have gone on seeing into the thing for weeks, he said. Two regular tourists walked in, glanced about them, and almost before

he could look round, they were gone. They will say, they saw what there was to be seen. Poor fellows ! Other men might have instructed them : now they will have their own misconceptions, arising from hasty impressions, to contend with.

I must say, though, that anything is better than insincerity in the way of admiration. If we do not care about what we see, let us not pretend to do so. We do not come out to tell lies, but rather to get away from falsehood of all kinds.

There is also an observation to be made with respect to the enjoyment of the beauties of natural scenery, which applies not only to travelling, but is of very general application ; namely, that we should enjoy and make much of that which comes in our way on everyday occasions. While it may be well worth the while of the lover of nature to be curious in looking after rocks, rivers, mountains, and waterfalls, yet the obvious, everyday beauties of nature are not to be disregarded. Perhaps the short hasty gazes cast up any day in the midst of business in a dense city at the heavens, or at a bit of a tree seen amid buildings,—gazes which partake almost more of a sigh than a look, have in them more of intense appreciation of the beauties of nature than all that has been felt by an equal number of sight-seers, enjoying large opportunity of seeing, and all their time to themselves. Like a prayer offered up in the midst of everyday life, these short, fond gazes at nature have something incon-

ceivably soothing and beautiful in them. There is a remark by an exquisite observer and very subtle, often very profound, thinker, which indeed suggested the above thoughts, though we have each turned the thing a different way, he looking at a certain unreality in nature, and I considering the combination of the upturned look to nature with the ordinary, earthly life of man. "But this beauty of nature," he says, "which is seen and felt as beauty, is the least part. The shows of the day, the dewy morning, the rainbow, mountains, orchards in blossom, stars, moonlight, shadows in still water, and the like, if too eagerly hunted, become shows merely, and mock us with their unreality. Go out of the house to see the moon, and 'tis mere tinsel, it will not please us when its light shines upon your necessary journey."¹

There is this too, to be said, that this habitual appreciation of nature on everyday occasions may prevent your missing the very highest beauties; for what you go to see as a sight, may never be shown to you under most favourable circumstances; whereas a much inferior scene may be combined with such accidental circumstances of beauty as in reality to be the finest thing you will ever have an opportunity of beholding. We must not be altogether captivated by great names: the sincere, clear-sighted man is not; and has his reward for his independence of mind, in seeing many beauties in man and nature, which escape the perception of those who see by book alone.

¹ EMERSON. *Nature—Chapter on Beauty of.*

Before quitting the subject of travelling, I cannot help making a remark which has often occurred to me, but which, however, has regard, not so much to the travellers as to those they travel amongst. It concerns all those who preside over coach-offices, diligence-offices, post-offices, and custom-houses. What a fine opportunity such people have, it seems to me, to manifest a Christian temper. It is tiresome to you, O postmaster, to be asked all manner of questions, of which you cannot see the drift, or which you think you have answered in your first reply ; but the poor inquirer is far from home ; he has but a dim understanding of your language, still dimmer of your customs ; his little daughter is ill at home, perhaps ; he wants to be assured by hearing again what you said, even if he thought he understood the meaning at first : and you should be good-natured and voluminous in your replies. Besides, you must bethink yourself, that what is so simple to you as your daily transactions, may nevertheless be somewhat complicated, and hard to understand, especially to a foreign mind. You might, I think, carry in your mind an imaginary affiche, which you should see before you on the wall which fronts you as you address your applicants.

ADVICE TO MEN IN SMALL AUTHORITY.

“It is a great privilege to have an opportunity many times in a day, in the course of your business, to do a real kindness which is not to be paid for. Graciousness

of demeanour is a large part of the duty of any official person who comes in contact with the world. Where a man's business is, there is the ground for his religion to manifest itself."

And we travellers, on our parts, if only from an anxiety to give other nations a good opinion of ours, should beware of showing insolence, or impertinence, to those who give us welcome. The relation of host and guest should never be quite effaced from the mind of either party.

CHAPTER XII.

I WANDERED about amongst the young trees this morning, looking at their different shades of green, and I thought if they, drinking from the same soil and the same air, and standing still in the same spot, showed such infinite varieties, what might be expected from men. Then I thought of the anecdote of Charles V. in retirement, endeavouring in vain to make his watches keep time together, and the inference he drew therefrom of the difficulty of making men think alike upon religious matters. Ah, when it once comes to thinking, good-bye to anything like strict agreement amongst men.

But always amongst my thoughts to-day came that of the death of Sir Robert Peel, which I heard of last night.¹ Sad! sad! such a sorry death for so great a man—and, as we men should say, so inopportune. I had hoped, as I have no doubt many others who take an interest in public affairs had done, that he would have remained as a great power aloof from party, a weight of private opinion, if we may say so, which should come in at the most important times, to declare what is thought by the impartial bystander; who, I should say (varying the

¹ July 1850.

common proverb), does not see most of the game, but sees things which the players do not see. Then I thought of his ways, which had often amused me, and which I had learned to like ; of his exquisite adroitness ; of the dignity of the man ; of the humanity, and of what always struck me so forcibly—of his amenability to good reasoning from whatever quarter it came.

Then I thought of what I am often meditating upon—how the government of this country might be improved.

There is no doubt that our constitution is a great thing, the result of long struggle and labour of all kinds ; but still how much its working might be amended ; and it is to that amendment that the attention of thoughtful men ought to be directed. Let us look at the matter frankly on all sides.

It is a great advantage that affairs are long considered in this country.

It is a great advantage that scarcely any shade of opinion is without a hearing in the great assemblies of this country.

It is a great advantage that a number of persons are exercised in public business ; and that our prosperity and advancement do not depend on one man, or even a few men.

It is a great advantage that grievances are sure to be discussed.

On the other hand, let us honestly allow that it is a great evil, that the choice of men to fill the most important offices should be chiefly limited to parliamentary men.

It is a great evil that honours and places should be confined to them and theirs : why should a man be made a peer because he has failed in an election, or a baronet because his vote is much wanted ? Such things are too bad, and must be put a stop to.

It is a great evil that no good measures can be carried swiftly—so that remedies often come too late.

What an improvement it would be if peerages for life were permitted. It would, in my opinion, supply the House of Lords with just that element of popular influence which is wanted.

And so, again, of official seats in the House of Commons : what a benefit it would be if just men could be put there occasionally, whom the world would be glad to listen to, but whom a constituency will not listen to, or who are not in a position to ask it to listen.

We must have many improvements in government. Questions are looming in the distance which will require the ablest minds in the country. If we ever become more sincere as individuals, we shall need to express that sincerity in political action.

It seems to me there is vast room for improvement in many branches of government—in finance, in colonisation, in dealing with the poor, in the proceedings of the state as regards religion. For, whatever some of us may think or wish, religious questions of high import will not long be in the background.

At present, the relations between people in power and

the general intelligence of the country are not such as they might be.

I know the difficulty of any sound reforms in government; but if we never attempt any, they are sure at some time to be attempted by the clumsiest and coarsest mechanism.

The loss of Sir Robert Peel is great indeed, I again exclaimed to myself, as I thought what an official reformer he might have been; not reckless to change or blame, inclined to give due consideration to official persons—a class of men who amply deserve it—and carrying out reforms, not in a spirit of condemnation, but of desire for increased effectiveness and force.

What a loss in that man! I will go and talk to Dunsford, I said, from whom one is always sure of sympathy and kindness.

Without delay I began to turn my steps towards his parsonage, making my way along the lanes with lofty hedges, enjoying the scent of the sweet hawthorn, and escaping, as far as might be, an east wind, which with a warm sun made a most unpleasant combination of weather; the east wind, like some small private vexation, rendering the rest of one's prosperity not merely unpalatable, but ill-timed.

As I went along, I thought of the Church of England, and of what might be its future fortunes. I have just been reading the works of two brothers; last night I had finished an elaborate attack from the Roman Catholic side upon the Anglican Church by one brother; and

this morning I had read a very skilful attack upon all present religious systems by another brother. And I thought to myself, the Church of England suffers from both attacks.

One's acquaintances who meet one in the streets shrug their shoulders and exclaim, "What a state the Church is in! Oh that these questions that divide it had never been raised." I do not agree with them, and sometimes I tell them so. If there are these great differences amongst thoughtful men about great subjects, why should they (the differences) be stifled? Are we always to be walking about as masked figures?

No doubt it is a sad thing that works of charity and mercy should be ever interrupted by indefinite disputes upon points which, when once taken up, are with extreme difficulty settled well, or laid aside. But then, on the other hand, how much good is prevented by the continuance of insincerity, by an insincere adherence on the part of men to that which they believe not. Besides, it is not as if all went on smoothly now: how much, for instance, the cause of education suffers from the existence of religious differences!

Moreover, who can tell the general mischief produced in all human affairs by degrading views of religion, which more thought might enlarge or dispel? Men's laws and customs are merely their religion applied to life. And, again, what a pity it would be if controversy were abandoned to the weak or the controversial only: so that, even for the sake of peace, it may be good for a man

not to suppress his thoughts upon religious subjects, if he has any.

For my own part, it has long appeared to me that our Church stands upon foundations which need more breadth and solidity, both as regards the hold it ought to have on the reason and on the affection of its members.

As to the hold upon the reason: suppose we were taught to study scientifically, up to a certain point, something that admitted of all the lights of study; and were then called upon to take the rest for granted, not being allowed to use to the uttermost the lights of history and criticism which have been admitted at first: how very inconclusive the so-called conclusions would appear to us. It would be like placing a young forest tree in a hothouse and saying, "Grow so far, if you like, expand to the uttermost in this space allowed to you, but there is no more room after you have attained these limits; thenceforward grow inwards, or downwards, or wither away." Our Church is too impersonal, if I may use that expression: it belongs too much to books, set creeds, and articles, and not enough to living men; it does not admit easily of those modifications which life requires, and which guard life by adapting it to what it has to bear.

Again, as regards affection, how can any but those who are naturally devout and affectionate, which is not the largest class, have an affectionate regard for anything which presents so cold and formal an appearance as the

Church of England. The services are too long ; and, for the most part, are surrounded by the most prosaic circumstances. Too many sermons are preached ; and yet, after all, too little is made of preaching. The preachers are apt to confine themselves to certain topics, which, however really great and solemn, are exhaustible : at least as far as men can tell us aught about them. Order, decency, cleanliness, propriety, and very often good sense, are to be seen in full force in Anglican Churches once a week ; but there is a deficiency of heartiness.

The perfection to be aimed at, as it seems to me, as I have said before, would be a Church with a very simple creed, a very grand ritual, and a useful and devoted priesthood. But these combinations are only in Utopias, Blessed Islands, and other fabulous places ; no vessel enters their ports, for they are as yet only in the minds of thoughtful men.

In forming such an imaginary Church, there certainly are some things that might be adopted from the Roman Catholics. The other day I was at Rouen ; I went to see the grand old Cathedral ; the great western doors were thrown wide open right upon the market-place filled with flowers, and, in the centre aisle, not before any image, a poor woman and her child were praying. I was only there a few minutes, and these two figures remained impressed upon my mind. It is surely very good that the poor should have some place free from the restraints,

the interruptions, the familiarity, and the squalidness of home, where they may think a great thought, utter a lonely sigh, a fervent prayer, an inward wail. And the rich need the same thing too.

Protestantism, when it shuts up its churches, or allows discreditable twopences to be paid at the door, cannot be said to show well in these matters. In becoming so nice and neat, it seems to have brushed away a great deal of meaning and usefulness with the dirt and irregularity.

The great difficulty in reforming any Church lies, of course, in the ignorance of its members. Moreover, there may be great indifference to any Church, or dissatisfaction with it, amongst its members; but then people say to themselves, if we touch this or that thing which we disapprove of, we do not know what harm we may not be doing to people of less insight or less caution than ourselves; and so they go on, content with a very rude attempt indeed at communion in spiritual matters, provided they do not, as they would say, unsettle their neighbours. There is something good and humble in this; there is something also of indifference: if our ancestors had always been content with silent protests against the things they disapproved of, we might have been in a worse position than we are now.

To lay down any guidance for action in this matter is very difficult indeed. According to the usual course of human affairs, some crisis will probably occur, which nobody foresees, and then men will be obliged to speak

and act boldly. It behoves them to bethink themselves, from time to time, of whither they are tending in these all-important matters.

The intellectual energies of cultivated men want directing to the great questions. If there is doubt in any matter, shall we not examine? Instead of that, men shut their thoughts up, and pretend to be orthodox—play at being orthodox. Meanwhile, what an evil it must be to the Church, if through unnecessary articles of faith, some of the best men are prevented from becoming clergymen, and many of the laity rendered less hearty members than they otherwise would be, of the Church.

Dwelling upon such thoughts, which are full of pain and anxiety—the thoughts of one who is always desirous to make the best of anything that is before him, and who is well aware how hard it is to reform anything from without—I reached Dunsford's quiet little parsonage.

I found my old friend sitting in his garden in the very spot where I expected to find him, and for which I made my way without going through the house. In the middle of his kitchen-garden he has placed his beehives, and has surrounded them by a semicircle of juniper-trees about five feet high. In front of the beehives is a garden-seat, upon which I found him sitting and reciting Latin poetry to himself, which I had no difficulty in discerning, though I could not hear the words, to be from his favourite author, Virgil. Ellesmere, who views everything in a droll sarcastic way, says that our friend has chosen this

particular seat in his garden from its being likely to be the place least disturbed by his sister and his curate. Though very good people, they are somewhat fussy, and given to needless gesticulation, which the bees dislike, and occasionally express their dislike in a very tangible manner. This spot, therefore, which is guarded by thousands of little soldiers, well-armed and well-equipped, distinguished from their human prototypes by gaining supplies and not by wasting them, affords a very secure retreat for our friend, where he can talk Virgil to himself for half an hour on a sunny morning.

It was not altogether without trepidation that I took my seat by his side amidst innumerable buzzings and whizzings; but he assured me with a smile that the bees would not hurt me, and in a minute or two their presence was only like a murmur of the distant wind through the trees.

I began at once to narrate to Dunsford the melancholy circumstances of Sir Robert Peel's death, which he had not heard of before, and which affected him deeply. Naturally his emotion increased my own. After I had told him the sad story, and answered his various questions about it, we remained silent for a time. I looked at the bees and thought of Manchester and other of the great hives and marts of industry: Dunsford went on with his Virgil: at last we thus resumed our dialogue.

Dunsford. I do not wonder, my dear Leonard, that you were much affected by Sir Robert's death. I always

felt how much you ought to sympathise with him. Indeed, there are two or three minor points in which you often put me a little in mind of him.

Milverton. It is strange I never heard you say so.

Dunsford. I did not think you much admired him, or would feel pleased at being likened to him in anything. But this is what I mean,—it always appeared to me that he had the most peculiar appreciation of the irrationality, and difficult to manage, of mankind. This was one of the things which made him so cautious. He never threw out his views or opinions till the moment when they were to be expressed in action. He did not want to provoke needless opposition. In short it was clear that he had the keenest apprehension of the folly of the world ; he was very obstinate withal, or, as I had better say, resolved ; and very sensitive. He did nothing under the hope that it would pass easily, and cost him nothing to do ; and yet, at the same time, though he foresaw distinctly opposition and unreason and calumny, he felt them more perhaps than quite beseemed so wise and resolute a man when they did come. You best know whether I am right in attributing some of the same strength and some of the same weakness to the man who sits beside me.

Milverton. I neither admit nor deny ; but surely, Dunsford, it is not unwise nor imprudent to expect to have every degree of irrationality to battle with in anything one may undertake ; and time is seldom lost in preparing to meet that irrationality ; or strength, in keep-

ing one's projects long before one. This is not merely worldly wisdom : such conduct results from a deep care for the success of the project itself.

Dunsford. Much of it is the result of temperament ; and temperament is a part of our nature sooner developed than almost any other. How soon you see it in children, and how decisively marked !

Milverton. I cannot help thinking what a shrewd man you are, Dunsford, when you choose to be so. It is you who ought to conduct great law-cases, and write essays, instead of leaving such things to Ellesmere and myself, and pretending that you are the simple, unworldly, retired man, content to receive your impressions of men and things from your pupils. I suppose that watching these bees gives you a great insight into the management of states and the conduct of individuals. You recite Virgil to them, and they buzz into your ears bee-wisdom of the most refined kind.

Dunsford. Talking of essays, may I ask, Mr. Milverton, what you are about ? You have not been near me for some time, and I always construe your absence into some new work.

Milverton. You are right in this case ; but I mostly avoid talking about what I am doing, at least, till it is in some state of forwardness. Talking prevents doing. Silence is the great fellow-workman.

Dunsford. The bees ?

Milverton. They buzz when they come home : they are silent enough at their work. Moreover, I am beginning

to care less and less about criticism during the progress of work, fearing less, you see, Dunsford, the irrationality of the world; for what you mainly aim to get at by listening to criticism is not so much what will be understood, as what will be misunderstood,—and that misunderstanding arises sometimes from your own error in thought, sometimes from bungling workmanship, sometimes from the irrationality of mankind; or from some unfortunate combination of these various sources of error. My growing indifference to criticism, in fact, the reason why my steps have not been bent so often lately in the direction of the Rectory, I would have you to believe, results not from any increasing confidence in my own workmanship, but from my growing faith in the general rationality and kindness of mankind.

Dunsford. Humph!

Milverton. Besides, my endeavours and aspirations are so humble——

Dunsford. Humph!

Milverton. You will agree with me when you see what I mean. They are so humble that they do not require all that adverse criticism and consequent moulding which more elaborate schemes might do. For instance, I believe in the definite improvability of ourselves and of everything around us. Do not be frightened, and look up so strangely, Dunsford; I do not mean perfectibility. Now, if by way of carrying out this belief of mine, I had any scheme of social regeneration, in which everything and everybody was to be put in his or its right place, of

course it would have been necessary for me to have come very often over to the Rectory, to drink in sound wisdom in the way of all kinds of comment, objection, and elaboration, from you and Lucy, and these wise bees.

Dunsford. I declare, Milverton, when Ellesmere is not with us, you play both his part and your own : but go on.

Milverton. No—but, seriously, my dear Dunsford, to go on with my schemes of improvability, I assure you they are on a very humble basis. Looking around, I see what slight things are often the real hindrances to the best endeavours of men. I would aim to take these hindrances out of a man's path. Mark you, I do not expect that he will therefore become a greater man, but he will certainly be able to act more like one. To descend to particulars, why I delight so much in sanatory reform is not so much in the thing itself, if I may say so, as in the additional power and freedom it gives to mankind. I do not know what social arrangements will be good for the coming generation, what churches will be best for them, what forms of legislation ; but I am sure that in whatever they do, they will be entangled with fewer difficulties, and will act more healthfully and wisely, if they are healthy men themselves.

Dunsford. Good doctrine, I think.

Milverton. In the same way I would seek to remove all manner of social disabilities ; always again with a view to the future, that the removal of these disabilities may give room for more freedom of thought and action.

Dunsford. I do not quite understand this, but do not wait to explain : go on.

Milverton. It is for the same reasons that I delight in education (and you know that I do not mean a small thing by education) because of its enabling powers, to use a legislative phrase. Here again I do not pretend to see what will become of people when educated, or to suggest the forms that such discipline will ultimately fit them for ; but I cannot but believe that it will make any people into material more malleable in the hands of the wise and good—of those who should be, and who to a certain extent are, the leaders of each generation. Indeed, I believe that always as men become greater, they are more easy to deal with.

Dunsford. I begin to see what you would be at.

Milverton. I conceive that as civilisation advances, a thousand little complexities arise with it. To untie them in any way may be a humble effort, but seems to me a most needful one. What we are ever wanting is to give freedom without license : to free a man from mean conformity——

Dunsford. By making him conform to something higher. I think, Milverton, I have assisted in pointing this out to you when I was afraid that you were making too much war upon conformity.

Milverton. It is only one of many things, my dear friend, which I have learned from you.

Dunsford. Thank you, my dear Leonard. I must say you have always been most willing to give more than

due heed to anything your old tutor has said, with the exception of the advice he used to tender to you at College about getting up certain problems in the Differential and Integral Calculus.

Milverton. And I wish I had listened to that advice also.

Dunsford. But are you not a little afraid, my friend (not that I would say one word against any good purpose you may have), that with all your imaginary cultivation and enabling men to act more freely and wisely by the removal of small disabilities, which yet I admit may be great hindrances : are you not afraid, that after all we shall advance into something very tiresome, somewhat of a dead level, which observers even now say is very visible in the world—no great man, but a number of decent, ordinary, cultivated, commonplace persons ? I believe I am now talking Ellesmere to you ; for, in reality, I prefer the advancement of the great mass of mankind to any pre-eminence of a few : but still I should like to hear what you have to say to this objection.

Milverton. I am delighted that you have raised it. I suspect there is a great delusion in this matter. The notion that there is a dead level in modern times is a mistake : *it is only that there are more eminences.* Formerly, one class or kind of men made a noise in the world, or at least made the chief noise ; and, looking across the hazy distances of time, we are deluded by great names. An Alexander, a Timour the Tartar, an Attila, a Charlemagne, loom large in the distance. There

were not so many ways to pre-eminence then—added to which, I should be very slow to connect greatness of thought, or greatness of nature, with resounding deeds.

Dunsford. Surely at the latter end of the fifteenth, and in the sixteenth century, there were unrivalled great men—a galaxy of them.

Milverton. Yes, I admit ; and no man looks up to some of the personages of that era with more reverence and regard than I do : and, moreover, I would not contend that there may not be an occasional galaxy, as you have termed it, of such men. But all I have to contend against is, that the tendency of modern cultivation is not necessary to bring men to a dead level, and to subdue all real greatness.

Dunsford. But you must admit that there is a certain smallness in the men of our time, and a foolish hurry in their proceedings.

Milverton. No : that is not exactly what we have reason to complain of, but rather a certain coldness, an undue care for respectability, and too much desire to be safe. One of our most observant men, who has seen a great deal of the world, and always desired to understand the generation under him as well as that which came before him, says, that the young men of the present day are better than the young men of his time ; but there is one thing that he complains of in them, and that is, their fear of ridicule. To a certain extent he is right, I think ; only I should modify his remark a little, and say, that it is not exactly that they fear ridicule, as they dislike to

put themselves in such a position that they may justly be made ridiculous. It is partly caution, partly fastidiousness, partly a fear of ridicule.

Dunsford. Well, then, I think that each man is more isolated than he used to be. There is less of clanship, less of the rallying round men of force or genius. How very rare a thing it is for one man to devote himself to the purposes framed by another's mind, or to give evidence of something like devotion to his person. Yet this would often be the wisest and the noblest form of exertion.

Milverton. But then there would be no originality, as they think, and there is now a diseased desire for originality, which is never to be got by the men who seek it. All the while the most original thing would be to be humble and subservient to great purposes, from whomsoever adopted.

At the same time, I must say that, as far as I have observed, the young would be very devoted to forward the purposes of their elders and superiors, whether in parliament, in offices, or in any other functions of civil life : and I think that in our times, great fault has often been on the side of the elders in not making just use of the young talent lying everywhere about them.

Dunsford. That may be.

Milverton. Indeed, Dunsford, it is not every one who, like yourself, is anxious to elicit the powers, and to carry forward the purposes of younger men. It requires a great deal of kind-hearted imagination to do that.

Dunsford. You make too much of this, Milverton. It is natural that I should care about my own pupils more than anything else. I live in their doings.

Milverton. And in your new edition, that is to be, of the Second part of Algebra, as Ellesmere would say, if he were here : but to return to our subject, I will tell you, at least I will try and tell you, in a somewhat fanciful way, what I think of the whole matter.

Have you ever known well a beautiful bit of natural scenery, before man has come to settle in it—a cliff near the sea, a mead near a lake, or the outskirts of a noble forest? If so; you recollect the delicately-rounded, gracefully indented, or grotesquely out-jutting forms, which the rock, or the hill, or the margin of the waters, or the outskirts of the wood had taken—forms dear to the painter and the poet. (Here Lucy entered the enclosure where we were sitting.)

Lucy. The painter and the poet—I am sure this is something which I may listen to, Mr. Milverton ; may I not ?

Milverton. There are few persons, Lucy, who have more feeling for the works of painters and poets ; and so you have a right to hear anything that is to be said about them. (I then repeated to her the former part of the sentence.) You then, perhaps, after an interval of many years, pass by the same place. A number of square white houses, poor in form and questionable in design, deface the beautiful spot. The delicate impressions of nature are gone, and in their stead are the angular marks

of men's handiwork. The painter hurries by the place ; the poet, too, unless he is a very philosophic one, passes shuddering by. But, in reality, what forms of beauty, in conduct, in suffering, in endeavour ; what tragedies, what romances ; what footprints, as it were, angelic and demoniac—now belong to that spot. It is true, we have lost wonderful lichens and those exquisitely-coloured mosses on the rocks which were the delight of the artist. Perhaps there are now ungainly initials in their place, illustrative, however, of a deeper poetry than ever was there before. But I grow too fanciful, and must descend to prosaic explanations. I mean, in short, that though there is more cultivation (which, it must be confessed, effaces somewhat of the natural rugged beauty of the scene), there is also more of a higher beauty which sits beside the other (plain prosaic cultivation) always, though oft unkennd by mortal eyes. So, in the advancement of mankind, the great barbaric outlines are broken into, and defaced ; but a thousand new beauties, new delicacies, even new greatnesses, take their place. Nature is ever affluent in such things ; and this effect of cultivation is to be seen, not only in mankind, but in individual men. For instance, Dunsford, the very shyness and coldness of modern youth arises in some measure from the growth of tact and delicacy. But I need not explain further ; you see what I mean.

Dunsford. I think I do ; and as it is a charitable view, I wish to think it a true one. But I could object to your metaphor, if I chose to do so.

Lucy. And is it equally true, Mr. Milverton, with the young ladies as with the young gentlemen?

Milverton. Why, my dear Lucy, the young ladies are always of course more in harmony with nature. Though women are more slavish to small conventionalities than men, the real advance of civilisation tells much less upon women than upon men. One who knew them well says that "The ideas of justice, of virtue, of vice, of goodness, of wickedness, float only on the surface of their souls (consequently the prevailing ideas amongst men on these subjects make comparatively little impression upon women), in the depths of which (their souls) they have 'l'amour propre et l'intérêt personnel' (I quote his very words) with all the energy of nature; and, more civilised than ourselves from without, they have remained true savages within; (plus civilisées que nous en dehors, elles sont restées de vraies sauvages en dedans)."

Lucy. The man is a savage himself: he must be a French Mr. Ellesmere.

Milverton. They are daring words, certainly; but perhaps they have a scintilla of truth in them. However, I will come again some day, and endeavour to elucidate these things a little further. Now I see the bees are flocking homewards with well-laden thighs, and I, too, must go back to my hive, well-laden with the wisdom to be gained from the thoughtful trees and beautiful flowers of the Rectory.

Dunsford.

"Et fessæ multâ referunt se nocte minores,
Crura thymo plenæ; pascuntur et arbuta passim,

Et glaucas salices, casiamque crocumque rubentem,
Et pinguem tiliam, et ferrugineos hyacinthos.
Omnibus una quies operum, labor omnibus unus."

Milverton. Now, Miss Lucy, you must translate. I know you do that with all your uncle's favourite bits : and to tell the truth, I have forgotten some of the words. What is tilia ?

Lucy. You must not be very critical then, if I do translate, and ask for every word to be rendered.

Now homewards come, borne on the evening breeze,
With heavy-laden thighs, the younger bees :
Each in the arbutus has hid his head,
In yellow willow-bloom, in crocus red,
And the rich foliage which the lindens spread :
One common labour each companion knows,
And for the weary swarm is one repose.

Milverton. A little liberal, Lucy, but it gives some of the sense of the passage, I think ; and you are a good girl for not making more fuss about letting me hear it. I really must go now ; so good-bye.

And so I walked homewards, thinking much of Dunsford's mild wisdom, and how beautiful it is to see old age gracefully filling its high vocation of a continually-enlarging sympathy with the young, and tolerance for them. As Goethe says, "A man has only to become old to be tolerant ; I see no fault committed," he adds, "which I also might not have committed." But then it is a Goethe who is speaking. Dunsford has reached to the same level of toleration by sheer goodness of nature.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LONG, solitary ride enabled me to-day to bring to a conclusion a chapter which I had been thinking of for some time. It is difficult for a man, unless he is a perfect horseman, to think connectedly during a ride, which is the very reason why horse-exercise is so good for the studious and the busy; but the inspiriting nature of the exercise may enable the rider to overcome special points of difficulty in any subject he is thinking over. In truth, a subject of any magnitude requires to be thought over in all moods of mind; and that alone is one great reason for maintaining thoughts long in mind, before expressing them in speech or writing, that they come to be considered and reconsidered under all aspects, and to be modified by the various fortunes and states of temperament of the thinker.

There is all the difference between the thoughts of a man who is plodding homewards on his own legs, under an umbrella, and those of the same man who, on horse-back, is springing over the elastic turf, careless whether wind or rain drives against him or not, that there was between the after dinner and the next morning councils of the ancient Germans.

And, indeed, the subject I was thinking of, needs to be considered in all weathers of the soul, for it is very large ; and if I could present to other minds what comes under this subject in mine, I should have said a good deal of all that I may have to say on most subjects.

Without more introductory words, for a long introduction would be especially out of place in this case, the subject in question is the art of coming to an end.

Almost all human affairs are tedious. Everything is too long. Visits, dinners, concerts, plays, speeches, pleadings, essays, sermons, are too long. Pleasure and business labour equally under this defect, or, as I should rather say, this fatal superabundance.

It must not be supposed that tiresomeness belongs to virtue alone. Few people are more pedantic and tiresome than the vicious ; and I doubt whether if one were thrown on a desert island, and had only the means of rescuing Blair's works and many fictions of decidedly bad tendency, but thought to be amusing, one would not exclaim, " Blair for ever ! " and hurl the fictions into their element, the water.

But let us trace this lengthiness, not only in the results of men's works, but in their modes of operation.

Which, of all defects, has been the one most fatal to a good style ? The not knowing when to come to an end. Take some inferior writer's works. Dismiss nearly all the adjectives ; when he uses many substantives, either in juxtaposition, or in some dependence on each

other, reduce him to one ; do the same thing with the verbs ; finally, omit all the adverbs ; and you will, perhaps, find out that this writer had something to say, which you might never have discovered if you had not removed the superfluous words. Indeed, in thinking of the kind of writing that is needed, I am reminded of a stanza in a wild Arab song which runs thus—

“ Terrible he rode along,
With his Yemen sword for aid ;
Ornament it carried none,
But the notches on the blade.”¹

So, in the best writing, only that is ornament which shows some service done, which has some dint of thought about it.

Then there is a whole class of things which, though good in themselves, are often entirely spoilt by being carried out too far and inopportunistly. Such are punctiliousness, neatness, order, labour of finish, and even accuracy. The man who does not know how to leave off, will make accuracy frivolous and vexatious. And so with all the rest of these good things, people often persevere with them so inaptly and so inopportunistly as to contravene all their real merits. Such people put me in mind of plants which, belonging to one country and having been brought to another, persist in flowering in those months in which they, or their ancestors, were used

¹ See *Tait's Magazine*, July 1850, for what seems to be an admirable translation of a most remarkable poem “of an age earlier than that of Mahomet.”

to flower in the old country. There is one in a garden near me which in February delights to show the same gay colours for a day or two here, in these northern climes, with which it was wont to indulge the far-off inhabitants of countries near the Black Sea. It is in vain that I have remonstrated with this precocious shrub about its showing its good qualities at so inappropriate a period ; and in fact it can make so good an answer to any man who thus addresses it, that, perhaps, it is better to say nothing and pass by, thinking only of our own faults in this respect—and then, indeed, the shrub will not have flowered quite in vain, if it has been only for a single day.

A similar error in not knowing when to leave off occurs in the exercise of the critical faculty, which some men use till they have deadened the creative : and, in like manner men cavil and dissect and dispute till that which was merely meant as a means of discovering error and baffling false statement, becomes the only end they care about—the truth for them.

But a far more important field for this error of superabundance is in the vices of mankind. If men had but known when to leave off, what would have become of ambition, avarice, gluttony, quarrelling, cruelty ? Men go on conquering for conquering's sake, as they do hoarding for hoarding's sake. If it be true that Marlborough went on gaining needless victories, wasting uncalled-for blood and treasure, what a contemptible thing

it is ! I say, " if " he did so, for but a little investigation into history shows one how grievously men have been misrepresented : and, not having looked into the matter, I will not take the responsibility of the accusation on myself. But the instance, if just, is an apt one ; and, certainly, there are many similar instances in great commanders to bear it out. But what a contemptible application of talent it is, that a man should go on doing something very well which is not wanted, and should make work for himself that he may shine, or at least be occupied. It is absolutely childish. Such children have great conquerors been.

It is a grand thing for a man to know when he has done his work. How majestic, for instance, is the retirement of Sylla, Diocletian, and Charles the Fifth. These men may not afford particularly spotless instances, but we must make the most of those we have. There are very few men who know how to quit any great office, or to divest themselves of any robe of power.

How much, again, this error of not knowing when to leave off, pervades the various pursuits of men. How it is to be seen in art and literature : how much too in various professions and various crafts. The end is lost sight of in a foolish exercise of some facility in dealing with the means ; as when a man goes on writing for writing's sake, having nothing more to tell us ; or when a man who exercises some craft moderately well for the sake of gain, confines himself to that craft and is a craftsman nowhere else, when the gain is no longer needful for him.

But it may be said, Why speak of the art of leaving off? the instances you have given might sometimes be put under the head of not knowing how to begin; or, at any rate, they might more legitimately come under the heads of the various evil passions and habits to which they seem to belong. I do not altogether deny this, but at the same time I wish to show that there is an art of leaving off which may be exercised independently, if I may so express it, of the various affections of the mind.

This art will depend greatly upon a just appreciation of form and proportion. Where this proportion is wanting in men's thoughts or lives, they become one-sided. The mind enters into a peculiar slavery, and hardens into a creature of mere habits and customs. The comparative youthfulness of men of genius, which has often been noticed, results from their having a finer sense of proportion than other men, which prevents their being enslaved by the things which gradually close up the avenues of the soul. They, on the contrary, hold to Nature till the last, and would partake, in some measure, if it may be so, of her universality.

I hardly know anything that serves to give us a greater notion of the importance of proportion than the fact made known to us by chymistry, that but a few elements mingled together in different proportions give things of the most different nature (as we suppose) and different efficiency. This fact, after a consideration of the infinitely great as appreciated by the telescope, and the

infinitely small as divulged by the microscope, is to my mind the most significant in physics.

I fear, without more explanation, I shall hardly make myself understood here. I mean that this fact in chymistry affords a high idea of the importance of proportion ; and the error we have been considering is one that mainly arises from disproportion.

For instance, this want of power to leave off often shows an inadequate perception of the proportion which all proceedings here ought to bear to time. Everything is a function of time, as the mathematicians would well express it. Then only consider what needful demands there are on that time : what forms, compliments, civilities, offices of friendship, relationship, and duty, have to be transacted. Consider the interruptions of life. I have often thought how hardly these bear upon the best and most capable of men. Perhaps there are not many more than a thousand persons in the long roll of men who have done anything very great for mankind. Nations should have kept guard at their doors, as we fancy, that they might work undisturbed ; but, instead of that, domestic misery, poverty, error, and affliction of all kinds no doubt disturbed and distracted them—not without its enlightenment, and not perhaps to be wholly regretted for their sakes. But has any one thing so misled them and counteracted their abilities so much as this want of proportion I am speaking of, arising from their ignorance or inability to leave off ? which has limited their efforts to one thing—has made the warrior a warrior only,

incapable of dealing with his conquests ; the statesman a man of business and devices only, so that he gains power but cannot govern ; the man of letters a master of phrases only ; the man of so-called science a man like the Greek philosophers, who could only talk about science—skilful in that, but never having left off that talking to make a single experiment.

But surely there might be a breadth of purpose and extent of pursuit without inane versatility. As things are, it is not often that you find any one who holds his art, accomplishment, function, or business, in an easy disengaged way, like a true gentleman, so that he can bear criticism upon his doings in it nobly or indifferently, who is other than a kind of pedagogue. Much more difficult is it to find a man who sees the work before him in its just proportions and does it, yet does not make out of his work an obstacle to his perception of what besides is good and needful ; and who keeps the avenues of his mind open to influences other than those which immediately surround him.

I am ashamed when I think of the want of cultivation even in those who are reckoned most cultivated people ; and not so much of their want of cultivation, as their want of the power of continuous cultivation. Few, therefore, can endure leisure, or in fact can carry other burthens than those which they have been used to—like mules accustomed to carry panniers or pack-saddles in mountainous countries, which steer their way when free from their burthens just as if they still bore them,

allowing always the distance between the rocks and themselves which was necessary to clear their loaded panniers; a mode of proceeding which exceedingly alarms and astonishes the traveller mounted on these mules, till he understands the reason of it. Both men and mules are puzzled at having something new to undertake: and indeed the art of leaving off judiciously is but the art of beginning something else which needs to be done.

But if there is anything in which the beauty and the wisdom of knowing when to leave off is particularly manifested, it is in behaviour. And how rare is beautiful behaviour; greatly by reason of the want of due proportion in the characters and objects of most persons, and from their want of some perception of the whole of things. Let any man run over in his mind the circle of his friends and acquaintances; also, if he is a well-read man, of those whom he has become acquainted with in history or biography; and he will own how few are, or have been, persons of beautiful behaviour, of real greatness of mind.

This greatness of mind which shows itself daily in behaviour, and also in conduct when you take the whole of a life, may co-exist with foibles, with stains, with perversities, with ignorance, with shortcomings of any and of every kind. But there is one thing which is characteristic of it, and that is, its freedom from limitation. No one pursuit, end, aim, or occupation permanently sullies

its perceptions. It may be wicked for a time as David, cruel for a time as Cæsar, even false ; but these are only passing forms of mind ; and there is still room for virtue, piety, self-restraint, and clemency. Its intelligence is not a mirror obedient to private impulses that reflects only that which its will commands for the time ; but gives candidly some reflection of all that passes by. Hence, by God's blessing, it will know how to leave off ; whereas, on the contrary, the mind which is hedged in by the circumstances and ideas of one passion or pursuit, is painfully limited, be that passion or pursuit what it may.

Observe the calmness of great men, noting by the way, that real greatness belongs to no station and no set of circumstances. This calmness is the cause of their beautiful behaviour. Vanity, injustice, intemperance, are all smallnesses arising from a blindness to proportion in the vain, the unjust, and the intemperate. Whereas, no one thing, unless it be the love of God, has such a continuous hold on a great mind as to seem all in all to it. The great know, unconsciously, more of the real beneficent secret of the world : there is occasional repose of soul for them. How can such men be subdued by money, be enclosed by the ideas of a party, or a faction, be so shut up in a profession, an art, or a calling, as to see nought else, or to believe only in one form of expression for what is beautiful and good ?

Passing by a mountain stream, I once beheld an unfortunate trunk of a tree, which, having been shot down the side of a hill, and thus sent on, as the custom

is in those countries, down the stream to find its way to the haven, had unfortunately come too near a strong eddy, which caught it up and ever whirled it back again. How like the general course of man ! I thought. Down came the log with apparent vigour and intent each time, and it seemed certain that it would drive onwards in the course designed for it ; but each time it swirled round and was sent back again. Ever and anon it came with greater force, described a wider arc, and surely now, I thought, it will shoot down on its way ; but no, it paused for a moment, felt the influence of its fatal eddy, and then returned with the like force it had come down with. I waited and waited, groups of holiday-making people passed by me wondering, I daresay, what I stayed there to see ; but, unmindful of any of us, it went on performing its circles. I returned in the evening ; the poor log was still there, busy as ever in not going onwards ; and I went upon my journey, feeling very melancholy for this tree, and thinking there was little hope for it. It may even now be at its vain gyrations, knowing no rest, and yet making no advance to the seas for which it was destined.

So let it not be with us : caught up by no mean eddies which draw us to the side of the stream and compel us to revolve in the same narrow circlet of passion, of prejudice, of party, of ambition, of desire ; finding in constancy no limitation, in devotedness of pursuit no narrowness of heart, or thought, or creed ; choosing as the highway of our career one which widens and deepens

ever as we move along it; let us float on to that unmeasured ocean of thought and endeavour where the truly great in soul (often great because humble, for it is the pride of man which keeps him to small purposes and prevents his knowing when to leave off with earthly things), where the truly and the simply great shall find themselves in kindred waters of far other depth than those which they were first launched out upon.

After writing down the foregoing thoughts upon the art of coming to an end, which had been the subject of my morning's ride, I went out upon the lawn to refresh myself with the evening air. It was very clear: the stars and the moon were in all their splendour; and the shadows of the trees lay quietly upon the grass, as if the leaves, for the most part so restless, were now sleeping on their stems, like the birds upon the branches.

I had resolved that this reverie, a fitting one to conclude with, should be the last of which I would give an account. There is something sad about the end of anything, whether it be the building of a palace, the construction of a great history, like that of Gibbon, the finishing of a child's baby-house, or the conclusion of some small, unpretending work in literature. The first feelings of an author soon pass by. Those hopes and those fears which quite agitate the young pretender to fame, are equally dulled by failure or success. Meanwhile, the responsibility of writing does not grow less, at least in any thoughtful mind. With the little knowledge

we have on any subject, how we muster audacity to write upon it, I hardly know.

These signs, too, that we use for communicating our thoughts, which we call language, what a strange débris it is of the old languages—a result of the manifold corruptions of childish prattle, of the uncouth talk of soldiers sent into conquered provinces, of the vain efforts of rude husbandmen to catch an unfamiliar tongue. And, if we went back to the old languages, with equal knowledge of their antecedents, we should probably find that they also were lamentable gatherings from forgotten tongues, huts out of the ruins of palaces.

So much for the vehicle in which we convey our thoughts, imperfect enough in themselves.

Then, if we turn to the people, the manners, the customs, and the laws we have to act upon with these thoughts, there, too, what a mass of confusion is presented to us, collected from all parts of the earth and from all periods of history.

As I thought of this, I seemed to see the various races who had occupied this very spot flit by—Briton, Roman, Saxon, Norman, each with his laws, manners, and customs imprinted on his bearing, the wrecks of mighty empires shown in the very accoutrements of each shadowy form as it went by. And this mass of strangely-mingled materials is the substance that these imperfect thoughts expressed in imperfect language have to act upon.

And, then, what say these stars with their all-eloquent

silence, seeming to reduce all our schemes into nothings, to make our short-lived perplexities ludicrous, ourselves and our ways like a song that is not sung? What a cold reply they seem to give to all human works and questionings.

But, said I to myself, such trains of thought may easily be pursued too far ; we must not bring in the immensities about us and within us to crush our endeavours. Here we are ; let stars, or bygone times, or the wrecks of nations, or the corruptions of language, say or show what they will. There is something also to be done by us : we have our little portions of the reef of coral yet to build up. If we have not time to become wise, we have time enough to become resigned. If we have rude and confused material to work upon, and uncouth implements to work with, less must be required from us ; and, as for these stars, the true meaning to be got from them is in reality an encouraging one.

Some men have thought that one star or planet befriended them ; some, another. This man grew joyful when the ascendant star of his nativity came into conjunction with Jupiter, favourable to his destinies ; and that man grew pale when his planet came into opposition with Saturn, noxious to his horoscope, threatening the "House of Life." Nor is astrology extinct : science only lends it more meaning, but not a private one for kings or potentates. These stars say something very significant to all of us : and each man has the whole

hemisphere of them, if he will but look up, to counsel and befriend him. In the morning time, they come not within ken, when they would too much absorb our attention, and hinder our necessary business, but in the evening, they appear to us, to chasten over-personal thoughts, to put down what is exorbitant in earth-bred fancies, and to encourage those endeavours and aspirations which meet with no full response from any single planet, certainly not from the one we are on, but which derive their meaning and their end from the vastness and the harmony of the whole of God-directed nature and of life.

So thinking, I was enabled for a moment to see, or rather to feel, that the threads of our poor human affairs, tangled as they seem to be, might yet be interwoven harmoniously with the great cords of love and duty that bind the universe together. And so I returned to the house and said "Good-night" cheerfully to the friendly stars, which did not now seem to oppress me by their magnitude, or their multitude, or their distance.

ESSAYS

WRITTEN IN THE INTERVALS OF BUSINESS



THE FIRST PART

"AND he that knows how little certainty there is in human discourses, and how *we know in part, and prophesie in part*, and that of everything whereof we know a little, we are ignorant in much more, must either be content with such proportion as the things will bear, or as himself can get, or else he must never seek to alter or to persuade any man to be of his opinion. For the greatest part of discourses that are in the whole world, is nothing but a heap of probable inducements, plausibilities, and witty entertainments; and the throng of notices is not unlike the accidents of a battle, in which every man tells a new tale, something that he saw, mingled with a great many things which he saw not; his eyes and his fear joyning together equally in the instructions and the illusion, these make up the stories."

JEREMY TAYLOR's *Ductor Dubitantium*.

PART I.



ON PRACTICAL WISDOM.

PRACTICAL wisdom acts in the mind, as gravitation does in the material world : combining, keeping things in their places, and maintaining a mutual dependence amongst the various parts of our system. It is for ever reminding us where we are, and what we can do, not in fancy, but in real life. It does not permit us to wait for dainty duties, pleasant to the imagination, but insists upon our doing those which are before us. It is always inclined to make much of what it possesses : and is not given to ponder over those schemes which might have been carried on, if what is irrevocable had been other than it is. It does not suffer us to waste our energies in regret. In journeying with it we go towards the sun, and the shadow of our burden falls behind us.

In bringing anything to completion, the means which it looks for are not the shortest, nor the neatest, nor the best that can be imagined. They have, however, this advantage, that they happen to be within reach.

We are liable to make constant mistakes about the

nature of practical wisdom, until we come to perceive that it consists not in any one predominant faculty or disposition, but rather in a certain harmony amongst all the faculties and affections of the man. Where this harmony exists, there are likely to be well-chosen ends, and means judiciously adapted. But, as it is, we see numerous instances of men who, with great abilities, accomplish nothing, and we are apt to vary our views of practical wisdom according to the particular failings of these men. Sometimes we think it consists in having a definite purpose, and being constant to it. But take the case of a deeply selfish person: he will be constant enough to his purpose, and it will be a definite one. Very likely, too, it may not be founded upon unreasonable expectations. The object which he has in view may be a small thing; but being as close to his eyes as to his heart, there will be times when he can see nothing above it, or beyond it, or beside it. And so he may fail in practical wisdom.

Sometimes it is supposed that practical wisdom is not likely to be found amongst imaginative persons. And this is very true, if you mean by "imaginative persons" those who have an excess of imagination. For in the mind, as in the body, general dwarfishness is often accompanied by a disproportionate size of some part. The large hands and feet of a dwarf seem to have devoured his stature. But if you mean that imagination, of itself, is something inconsistent with practical wisdom, I think you will find that your opinion is not founded

on experience. On the contrary, I believe that there have been few men who have done great things in the world who have not had a large power of imagination. For imagination, if it be subject to reason, is its "slave of the lamp."

It is a common error to suppose that practical wisdom is something Epicurean in its nature, which makes no difficulties, takes things as they come, is desirous of getting rid rather than of completing, and which, in short, is never troublesome. And from a fancy of this kind, many persons are considered speculative merely because they are of a searching nature: and are not satisfied with small expedients, and such devices as serve to conceal the ills they cannot cure. And if to be practical is to do things in such a way as to leave a great deal for other people to undo at some future, and no very distant period—then, certainly, these scrutinising, painstaking sort of persons are not practical. For it is their nature to prefer a good open visible rent to a time-serving patch. I do not mean to say that they may not resort to patching as a means of delay. But they will not permit themselves to fancy that they have done a thing when they have only hit upon some expedient for putting off the doing.

Bacon says, "In this theatre of man's life, God and angels only should be lookers-on; that contemplation and action ought ever to be united, a conjunction like unto that of the two highest planets, Saturn the planet

of rest, and Jupiter the planet of action." It is in this conjunction, which seems to Bacon so desirable, that practical wisdom delights: and on that account it is supposed by some men to have a tinge of baseness in it. They do not know that practical wisdom is as far from what they term expediency, as it is from impracticability itself. They see how much of compromise there is in all human affairs. At the same time, they do not perceive that this compromise, which should be the nice limit between wilfulness and a desertion of the light that is within us, is the thing of all others which requires the diligent exercise of that uprightness which they fear to put in peril, and which, they persuade themselves, will be strengthened by inactivity. They fancy, too, that high moral resolves and great principles are not for daily use, and that there is no room for them in the affairs of this life. This is an extreme delusion. For how is the world ever made better? not by mean little schemes which some men fondly call practical, not by setting one evil thing to counteract another, but by the introduction of those principles of action which are looked upon at first as theories, but which are at last acknowledged and acted upon as common truths. The men who first introduce these principles are practical men, though the practices which such principles create may not come into being in the life-time of their founders.

AIDS TO CONTENTMENT.

THE first object of this essay is to suggest some antidotes against the manifold ingenuity of self-tormenting.

For instance, how much fretting might be prevented by a thorough conviction that there can be no such thing as unmixed good in this world ! In ignorance of this, how many a man, after having made a free choice in any matter, contrives to find innumerable causes for blaming his judgment ! Blue and green having been the only colours put before him, he is dissatisfied with himself because he omitted to choose pure white. Shenstone has worked out the whole process with fidelity. "We are oftentimes in suspense betwixt the choice of different pursuits. We choose one at last doubtingly, and with an unconquered hankering after the other. We find the scheme, which we have chosen, answer our expectations but indifferently—most worldly projects will. We, therefore, repent of our choice, and immediately fancy happiness in the paths which we decline ; and this heightens our uneasiness. We might at least escape the aggravation of it. It is not improbable we had been more unhappy, but extremely probable we had not been less so, had we made a different decision."

A great deal of discomfort arises from over-sensitiveness about what people may say of you, or your actions.

This requires to be blunted. Consider whether anything that you can do will have much connection with what they will say. And besides, it may be doubted whether they will say anything at all about you. Many unhappy persons seem to imagine that they are always in an amphitheatre, with the assembled world as spectators ; whereas, all the while, they are playing to empty benches. They fancy, too, that they form the particular theme of every passer-by. If, however, they must listen to imaginary conversations about themselves, they might, at any rate, defy the proverb, and insist upon hearing themselves well spoken of.

Well, but suppose that it is no fancy : and that you really are the object of unmerited obloquy. What then ? It has been well said, that in that case the abuse does not touch you ; and if you are guiltless, it ought not to hurt your feelings any more than if it were said of another person, with whom you are not even acquainted. You may answer that this false description of you is often believed in by those whose good opinion is of importance to your welfare. That certainly is a palpable injury ; and the best mode of bearing up against it is to endeavour to form some just estimate of its nature and extent. Measure it by the worldly harm which is done to you. Do not let your imagination conjure up all manner of apparitions of scorn, and contempt, and universal hissing. It is partly your own fault if the calumny is believed in by those who ought to know you, and in whose affections you live. That should be a circle within which no

poisoned dart can reach you. And for the rest, for the injury done you in the world's estimation, it is simply a piece of ill-fortune, about which it is neither wise nor decorous to make much moaning.

A little thought will sometimes prevent you from being discontented at not meeting with the gratitude which you have expected. If you were only to measure your expectations of gratitude by the extent of benevolence which you have expended, you would seldom have occasion to call people ungrateful. But many persons are in the habit of giving such a factitious value to any services which they may render, that there is but little chance of their being contented with what they are likely to get in return ; which, however, may be quite as much as they deserve.

Besides, it is a common thing for people to expect from gratitude what affection alone can give.

There are many topics which may console you when you are displeased at not being as much esteemed as you think you ought to be. You may begin by observing that people in general will not look about for anybody's merits, or admire anything which does not come in their way. You may consider how satirical would be any praise which should not be based upon a just appreciation of your merits : you may reflect how few of your fellow-creatures can have the opportunity of forming a just judgment about you : you may then go further, and think how few of those few are persons whose judg-

ment would influence you deeply in other matters : and you may conclude by imagining that such persons do estimate you fairly ; though perhaps you never hear it.

The heart of man seeks for sympathy, and each of us craves a recognition of his talents and his labours. But this craving is in danger of becoming morbid, unless it be constantly kept in check by calm reflection on its vanity, or by dwelling upon the very different and far higher motives which should actuate us. That man has fallen into a pitiable state of moral sickness, in whose eyes the good opinion of his fellow-men is the test of merit, and their applause the principal reward for exertion.

A habit of mistrust is the torment of some people. It taints their love and their friendship. They take up small causes of offence. They expect their friends to show the same aspect to them at all times ; which is more than human nature can do. They try experiments to ascertain whether they are sufficiently loved : they watch narrowly the effects of absence, and require their friends to prove to them that the intimacy is exactly upon the same footing as it was before. Some persons acquire these suspicious ways from a natural diffidence in themselves ; for which they are often loved the more : and they might find ample comfort in that, if they could but believe it. With others, these habits arise from a selfishness which cannot be satisfied. And their endeavours should be to uproot such a disposition, not to soothe it.

Contentment abides with truth. And you will generally suffer for wishing to appear other than what you are ; whether it be richer, or greater, or more learned. The mask soon becomes an instrument of torture.

Fit objects to employ the intervals of life are among the greatest aids to contentment that a man can possess. The lives of many persons are an alternation of the one engrossing pursuit, and a sort of listless apathy. They are either grinding, or doing nothing. Now to those who are half their lives fiercely busy, the remaining half is often torpid without quiescence. A man should have some pursuits which may be always in his power, and to which he may turn gladly in his hours of recreation.

And if the intellect requires thus to be provided with perpetual objects, what must it be with the affections? Depend upon it, the most fatal idleness is that of the heart. And the man who feels weary of life may be sure that he does not love his fellow-creatures as he ought.

You cannot hope for anything like contentment so long as you continue to attach that ridiculous degree of importance to the events of this life which so many people are inclined to do. Observe the effect which it has upon them : they are most uncomfortable if their little projects do not turn out according to their fancy—nothing is to be angular to them—they regard external things as the only realities ; and as they have fixed their

abode here, they must have it arranged to their mind. In all they undertake, they feel the anxiety of a gambler, and not the calmness of a labouring man. It is, however, the success or failure of their efforts, and not the motives for their endeavour, which gives them this concern. "It will be all the same a hundred years hence." So says the Epicuræan as he saunters by. The Christian exhorts them to extend their hopes and their fears to the far future. But they are up to their lips in the present, though they taste it none the more for that. And so they go on, fretting, and planning, and contending; until an event, about which of all their anxieties they have felt the least anxious, sweeps them and their cobwebs away from the face of the earth.

I have no intention of putting forward specifics for real afflictions, or pretending to teach refined methods for avoiding grief. As long, however, as there is anything to be done in a matter, the time for grieving about it has not come. But when the subject for grief is fixed and inevitable, sorrow is to be borne like pain. It is only a paroxysm of either that can justify us in neglecting the duties which no bereavement can lessen, and which no sorrow can leave us without. And we may remember that sorrow is at once the lot, the trial, and the privilege of man.

Most of the aids to contentment above suggested are, comparatively, superficial ones; and though they may be

serviceable, there is much in human nature that they cannot touch. Even Pagans were wont to look for more potent remedies. They could not help seeking for some great idea to rest upon ; something to still the throbbings of their souls ; some primæval mystery which should be answerable for the miseries of life. Such was their idea of Necessity, the source of such systems as the Stoic and the Epicurean. Christianity rests upon very different foundations. And surely a Christian's reliance on divine goodness, and his full belief in another world, should console him under serious affliction, and bear the severer test of supporting him against that under-current of vexations which is not wanting in the smoothest life.

ON SELF-DISCIPLINE.

THERE is always some danger of self-discipline leading to a state of self-confidence : and the more so, when the motives for it are of a poor and worldly character, or the results of it outward only, and superficial. But surely when a man has got the better of any bad habit or evil disposition, his sensations should not be those of exultation only ; ought they not rather to be akin to the shuddering faintness with which he would survey a chasm that he had been guided to avoid, or with which he would recall to mind a dubious deadly struggle which had terminated in his favour ? The sense

of danger is never, perhaps, so fully apprehended as when the danger has been overcome.

Self-discipline is grounded on self-knowledge. A man may be led to resolve upon some general course of self-discipline by a faint glimpse of his moral degradation : let him not be contented with that small insight. His first step in self-discipline should be to attempt to have something like an adequate idea of the extent of the disorder. The deeper he goes in this matter the better : he must try to probe his own nature thoroughly. Men often make use of what self-knowledge they may possess to frame for themselves skilful flattery, or to amuse themselves in fancying what such persons as they are would do under various imaginary circumstances. For flatteries and for fancies of this kind, not much depth of self-knowledge is required : but he who wants to understand his own nature for the purposes of self-discipline, must strive to learn the whole truth about himself, and not shrink from telling it to his own soul :—

To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

The old courtier Polonius meant this for worldly wisdom : but it may be construed much more deeply.

Imagine the soul, then, thoroughly awake to its state of danger, and the whole energies of the man devoted to self-improvement. At this point, there often arises a habit of introspection which is too limited in its nature ;

we scrutinise each action as if it were a thing by itself, independent and self-originating ; and so our scrutiny does less good, perhaps, than might be expected from the pain it gives and the resolution it requires. Any truthful examination into our actions must be good ; but we ought not to be satisfied with it, until it becomes both searching and progressive. Its aim should be not only to investigate instances, but to discover principles. Thus, —suppose that our conscience upbraids us for any particular bad habit : we then regard each instance of it with intense self-reproach, and long for an opportunity of proving the amendment which seems certain to arise from our pangs of regret. The trial comes : and sometimes our former remorse is remembered, and saves us ; and sometimes it is forgotten, and our conduct is as bad as it was before our conscience was awakened. Now in such a case we should begin at the beginning, and strive to discover where it is that we are wrong in the heart. This is not to be done by weighing each particular instance, and observing after what interval it occurred, and whether with a little more, or a little less, temptation than usual ; instead of dwelling chiefly on mere circumstances of this kind, we should try and get at the substance of the thing, so as to ascertain what fundamental precept of God is violated by the habit in question. That precept we should make our study ; and then there is more hope of a permanent amendment.

Infinite toil would not enable you to sweep away a

mist : but by ascending a little, you may often look over it altogether. So it is with our moral improvement : we wrestle fiercely with a vicious habit, which would have no hold upon us if we ascended into a higher moral atmosphere.

As I have heard suggested, it is by adding to our good purposes, and nourishing the affections which are rightly placed, that we shall best be able to combat the bad ones. By adopting such a course you will not have yielded to your enemy, but will have gone, in all humility, to form new alliances : you will then resist an evil habit with the strength which you have gained in carrying out a good one. You will find, too, that when you set your heart upon the things that are worthy of it, the small selfish ends, which used to be so dear to it, will appear almost disgusting ; you will wonder that they could have had such hold upon you.

In the same way, if you extend and deepen your sympathies, the prejudices which have hitherto clung obstinately to you will fall away, your former uncharitableness will seem absolutely distasteful : you will have brought home to it feelings and opinions with which it cannot live.

Man, a creature of twofold nature, body and soul, should have both parts of that nature engaged in any matter in which he is concerned : spirit and form must both enter into it. It is idol-worship to substitute the

form for the spirit : but it is a vain philosophy which seeks to dispense with the form. All this applies to self-discipline.

See how most persons love to connect some outward circumstance with their good resolutions : they resolve on commencing the new year with a surrender of this bad habit : they will alter their conduct as soon as they are at such a place. The mind thus shows its feebleness ; but we must not conclude that the support it naturally seeks is useless. At the same time that we are to turn our chief attention to the attainment of right principles, we cannot safely neglect any assistance which may strengthen us in contending against bad habits : far is it from the spirit of true humility to look down upon such assistance. Who would not be glad to have the ring of Eastern story, which should remind the wearer by its change of colour of his want of shame ? Still these auxiliaries partake of a mechanical nature : we must not expect more from them than they can give : they may serve as aids to memory ; they may form landmarks, as it were, of our progress ; but they cannot, of themselves, maintain that progress.

It is in a similar spirit that we should treat what may be called prudential considerations. We may listen to the suggestions of prudence, and find them an aid to self-discipline ; but we should never rest upon them. While we do not fail to make the due use of them, we must never forget that they do not go to the root of the matter. Prudence may enable a man to conquer the

world, but not to rule his own heart : it may change one evil passion for another ; but it is not a thing of potency enough to make a man change his nature.

Prayer is a constant source of invigoration to self-discipline : not the thoughtless praying, which is a thing of custom ; but that which is sincere, intense, watchful. Let a man ask himself whether he really would have the thing he prays for : let him think, while he is praying for a spirit of forgiveness, whether even at that moment he is disposed to give up the luxury of anger. If not, what a horrible mockery it is ! To think that a man can find nothing better to do, in the presence of his Creator, than telling off so many words : alone with his God, and repeating his task like a child : longing to get rid of it, and indifferent to its meaning !

ON OUR JUDGMENTS OF OTHER MEN.

IN forming these lightly, we wrong ourselves and those whom we judge. In scattering such things abroad, we endow our unjust thoughts with a life which we cannot take away, and become false witnesses to pervert the judgments of the world in general. Who does not feel that to describe with fidelity the least portion of the entangled nature that is within him would be no easy matter ? And yet the same man who feels this, and who, perhaps, would be ashamed of talking at hazard

about the properties of a flower, of a weed, of some figure in geometry, will put forth his guesses about the character of his brother-man, as if he had the fullest authority for all that he was saying.

But perhaps we are not wont to make such rash remarks ourselves : we are only pleased to receive them with the most obliging credence from the lips of any person we may chance to meet with. Such credulity is anything but blameless. We cannot think too seriously of the danger of taking upon trust these off-hand sayings, and of the positive guilt of uttering them as if they were our own, or had been assayed by our observation. How much we should be ashamed if we knew the slight grounds of some of those uncharitable judgments to which we lend the influence of our name by repeating them ! And even if we repeat such things only as we have good reason to believe in, we should still be in no hurry to put them forward, especially if they are sentences of condemnation. There is a maxim of this kind which Thomas à Kempis, in his chapter “*de prudentiâ in agendis*,” has given with all the force of expression that it merits. “*Ad hanc etiam pertinet, non quibuslibet hominum verbis credere ; nec audita vel credita, mox ad aliorum aures effundere.*”

There are certain things quite upon the surface of a man's character : there are certain obvious facts in any man's conduct : and there are persons who, being very much before the world, offer plenty of materials for judg-

ing about them. Such circumstances as these may fairly induce you to place credence in a general opinion, which, however, you have no means of verifying in any way for yourself : but in no case should you suffer yourself to be carried away at once by the current sayings about men's characters and conduct. If you do, you are helping to form a mob. Consider what these sayings are : how seldom they embody the character discussed ; or go far to exhaust the question, if it is one of conduct. It is well if they describe a part with faithfulness, or give indications from which a shrewd and impartial thinker may deduce some true conclusions. Again, these sayings may be true in themselves, but the prominence given to them may lead to very false impressions. Besides, how many of them must be formed upon the opinion of a few persons, and those, perhaps, forward thinkers.

You feel that you yourself would be liable to make mistakes of all kinds if you had to form an independent judgment in the matter : do not too readily suppose that the general opinions you hear are free from such mistakes merely because they are made, or appear to you to be made, by a great many people.

If we come to analyse the various opinions we hear of men's character and conduct, there must be many which are formed wrongly, though sincerely, either from imperfect information, or erroneous reasoning. There will be others which are the simple result of the prejudices and passions of the persons judging, of their humours, and

sometimes even of their ingenuity. There will be others grounded on total misrepresentations which arise from imperfect hearing, or from some entire mistake, or from a report being made by a person who understood so little of the matter that it was not possible for him to convey, with anything like accuracy, what he heard about it. Then there are the careless things which are said in general conversation, but which often have as much apparent weight as if they had been well considered. Sometimes these various causes are combined ; and the result is, that an opinion of some man's character and conduct gets abroad which is formed after a wrong method, by prejudiced persons, upon a false statement of facts, respecting a matter which they cannot possibly understand ; and this is then left to be inflated by Folly, and blown about by Idleness.

There is an excellent passage in Wollaston's *Religion of Nature* upon this subject, where he says, "The good or bad repute of men depends in a great measure upon mean people, who carry their stories from family to family, and propagate them very fast ; like little insects, which lay apace, and the less the faster. There are few, very few, who have the opportunity and the will and the ability to represent things truly. Beside the matters of fact themselves, there are many circumstances which, before sentence is passed, ought to be known and weighed, and yet scarce ever can be known, but to the person himself who is concerned. He may have other views, and another sense of things, than his judges have : and

what he understands, what he feels, what he intends, may be a secret confined to his own breast. Or perhaps the censorer, notwithstanding this kind of men talk as if they were infallible, may be mistaken himself in his opinion, and judge that to be wrong which in truth is right."

Few people have imagination enough to enter into the delusions of others, or indeed to look at the actions of any other person with any prejudices but their own. Perhaps, however, it would be nearer the truth to say that few people are in the habit of employing their imagination in the service of charity. Most persons require its magic aid to gild their castles in the air ; to conduct them along those fancied triumphal processions in which they themselves play so conspicuous a part ; to conquer enemies for them without battles ; and to make them virtuous without effort. This is what they want their imagination for ; they cannot spare it for any little errand of charity. And sometimes when men do think charitably, they are afraid to speak out, for fear of being considered stupid or credulous.

We have been considering the danger of adopting current sayings about men's character and conduct ; but suppose we consider, in detail, the difficulty of forming an original opinion on these matters ; especially if we have not a personal knowledge of the men of whom we speak. In the first place, we seldom know with sufficient exactness the facts upon which we judge : and a little

thing may make a great difference when we come to investigate motives. But the report of a transaction sometimes represents the real facts no better than the laboured variation does the simple air ; which, amidst so many shakes and flourishes, might not be recognised even by the person who composed it. Then, again, how can we insure that we rightly interpret those actions which we exactly know? Perhaps one of the first motives that we look for is self-interest, when we want to explain an action ; but we have scarcely ever such a knowledge of the nature and fortunes of another, as to be able to decide what is his interest, much less what it may appear to him to be : besides, a man's fancies, his envy, his wilfulness, every day interfere with, and override his interests. He will know this himself, and will often try to conceal it by inventing motives of self-interest to account for his doing what he has a mind to do.

It is well to be thoroughly impressed with a sense of the difficulty of judging about others ; still, judge we must, and sometimes very hastily : the purposes of life require it. We have, however, more and better materials, sometimes, than we are aware of : we must not imagine that they are always deep-seated and recondite : they often lie upon the surface. Indeed, the primary character of a man is especially discernible in trifles : for then he acts, as it were, almost unconsciously. It is upon the method of observing and testing these things, that a just knowledge of individual men in great measure depends.

You may learn more of a person even by a little converse with him than by a faithful outline of his history. The most important of his actions may be anything but the most significant of the man : for they are likely to be the results of many things besides his nature. To understand that, I doubt whether you might not learn more from a good portrait of him, than from two or three of the most prominent actions of his life. Indeed, if men did not express much of their nature in their manners, appearance, and general bearing, we should be at a sad loss to make up our minds how to deal with each other.

In judging of others, it is important to distinguish those parts of the character and intellect which are easily discernible from those which require much observation. In the intellect, we soon perceive whether a man has wit, acuteness, or logical power. It is not easy to discover whether he has judgment. And it requires some study of the man to ascertain whether he has practical wisdom ; which, indeed, is a result of high moral, as well as intellectual qualities.

In the moral nature, we soon detect selfishness, egotism, and exaggeration. Carelessness about truth is soon found out ; you see it in a thousand little things. On the other hand, it is very difficult to come to a right conclusion about a man's temper, until you have seen a great deal of him. Of his tastes, some will lie on the surface, others not ; for there is a certain reserve about most people in speaking of the things they like best.

Again, it is always a hard matter to understand any man's feelings. Nations differ in their modes of expressing feelings, and how much more individual men !

There are certain cases in which we are peculiarly liable to err in our judgments of others. Thus, I think we are all disposed to dislike in a manner disproportionate to their demerits, those who offend us by pretension of any kind. We are apt to fancy that they despise us ; whereas, all the while, perhaps they are only courting our admiration. There are people who wear the worst part of their characters outwards : they offend our vanity ; they rouse our fears ; and under these influences we omit to consider how often a scornful man is tender-hearted, and an assuming man, one who longs to be popular and to please.

Then there are characters of such a different kind from our own, that we are without the means of measuring and appreciating them. A man who has no humour, how difficult for him to understand one who has !

But of all the errors in judging of others, some of the worst are made in judging of those who are nearest to us. They think that we have entirely made up our minds about them, and are apt to show us that sort of behaviour only which they know we expect. Perhaps, too, they fear us, or they are convinced that we do not and cannot sympathise with them. And so we move about in a mist, and talk of phantoms as if they were living men, and think that we understand those who never interchange any discourse with us, but the talk of the market-place ;

or if they do, it is only as players who are playing a part, set down in certain words, to be eked out with the stage gestures for each affection, who would deem themselves little else than mad if they were to say out to us anything of their own.

ON THE EXERCISE OF BENEVOLENCE.

WITH the most engaging objects of benevolence around them, men consume the largest part of their existence in the acquisition of money or of knowledge ; or in sighing for the opportunities of advancement ; or in doting over some unavailing sorrow. Or, as it often happens, they are outwardly engaged in slaving over the forms and follies of the world, while their minds are given up to dreams of vanity ; or to long-drawn reveries, a mere indulgence of their fancy. And yet hard by them are groans, and horrors, and sufferings of all kinds, which seem to penetrate no deeper than their senses.

Let them think what boundless occupations there are before us all ! Consider the masses of human beings in our manufacturing towns and crowded cities, left to their own devices—the destitute peasantry of our sister-land—the horrors of slavery wherever it exists—the general aspect of the common people—the pervading want of education—the fallacies and falsehoods which are left, unchecked, to accomplish all the mischief that is in them—the many legal and executive reforms not likely to

meet with much popular impulse, and requiring, on that account, the more diligence from those who have any insight into such matters. By employing himself upon any one of the above subjects, a man is likely to do some good. If he only ascertains what has been done, and what is doing, in any of these matters, he may be of great service. A man of real information becomes a centre of opinion, and therefore of action.

Many a man will say :—"This is all very true : there certainly is a great deal of good to be done. Indeed, one is perplexed what to choose as one's point of action ; and still more how to begin upon it." To which I would answer :—Is there no one service for the great family of man which has yet interested you? Is no work of benevolence brought near to you by the peculiar circumstances of your life? If there is; follow at once. If not; still you must not wait for something apposite to occur. Take up any subject relating to the welfare of mankind, the first that comes to hand : read about it : think about it : trace it in the world and see if it will not come to your heart. How listlessly the eye glances over the map of a country upon which we have never set foot? On the other hand, with what satisfaction we contemplate the mere outline only of a land we have once travelled over? Think earnestly upon any subject, investigate it sincerely, and you are sure to love it. You will not complain again of not knowing whither to direct your attention. There have been enthusiasts about heraldry. Many have devoted themselves to chess. Is the welfare of living,

thinking, suffering, eternal creatures, less interesting than "argent" and "azure," or than the knight's move, and the progress of a pawn?

There are many persons, doubtless, who feel the wants and miseries of their fellow-men tenderly if not deeply; but this feeling is not of the kind to induce them to exert themselves out of their own small circle. They have little faith in their individual exertions doing aught towards a remedy for any of the great disorders of the world. If an evil of magnitude forces itself upon their attention, they take shelter in a comfortable sort of belief that the course of events or the gradual enlightenment of mankind, or, at any rate, something which is too large for them to have any concern in, will set it right. In short, they are content to remain spectators: or, at best to wait until an occasion shall arrive when their benevolence may act at once, with as little preparation of means, as if it were something magical.

But opportunities of doing good, though abundant, and obvious enough, are not exactly fitted to our hands; we must be alert in preparing ourselves for them. Benevolence requires method and activity in its exercise. It is by no means the same sort of thing as the indolent good humour with which a well-fed man, reclining on a sunny bank, looks upon the working world around him.

As to the notion of waiting for the power to do good, it is one that we must never listen to. Surely the exercise of a man's benevolence is not to depend upon his worldly good fortune! Every man has to-day the

power of laying some foundation for doing good, if not of doing it. And whoever does not exert himself until he has a large power of carrying out his good intentions, may be sure that he will not make the most of the opportunity when it comes. It is not in the heat of action, nor when a man, from his position, is likely to be looked up to with some reverence, that he should have to begin his search for facts or principles. He should then come forth to apply results; not to work them out painfully, and perhaps precipitately, before the eyes of the world.

The worldly-wise may ask :—"Will not these benevolent pursuits prevent a man from following with sufficient force (what they call) his legitimate occupations?" I do not see why. Surely Providence has not made our livelihood such an all-absorbing affair, that it does not leave us room or time for our benevolence to work in. However, if a man will only give up that portion of his thinking time which he spends upon vain-glory, upon imagining, for instance, what other people are thinking about him, he will have time and energy enough to pursue a very laborious system of benevolence.

I do not mean to contend that active benevolence may not hinder a man's advancement in the world: for advancement greatly depends upon a reputation for excellence in some one thing of which the world perceives that it has present need: and an obvious attention to other things, though perhaps not incompatible with the

excellence itself, may easily prevent a person from obtaining a reputation for it. But any deprivation of this kind would be readily endured if we only took the view of our social relations which Christianity opens to us. We should then see that benevolence is not a thing to be taken up by chance, and put by at once to make way for every employment which savours of self-interest. Benevolence is the largest part of our business, beginning with our home duties, and extending itself to the utmost verge of humanity. A vague feeling of kindness towards our fellow-creatures is no state of mind to rest in. It is not enough for us to be able to say that nothing of human interest is alien to us, and that we give our acquiescence, or indeed our transient assistance, to any scheme of benevolence that may come in our way. No : in promoting the welfare of others we must toil ; we must devote it to earnest thought, constant care, and zealous endeavour. What is more, we must do all this with patience ; and be ready, in the same cause, to make an habitual sacrifice of our own tastes and wishes. Nothing short of this is the visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, which our creed requires of us.

Kindness to animals is no unworthy exercise of benevolence. We hold that the life of brutes perishes with their breath, and that they are never to be clothed again with consciousness. The inevitable shortness then of their existence should plead for them touchingly. The insects on the surface of the water, poor ephemeral

things, who would needlessly abridge their dancing pleasure of to-day? Such feelings we should have towards the whole animate creation. To those animals over which we are masters for however short a time we have positive duties to perform. This seems too obvious to be insisted upon ; but there are persons who act as though they thought they could buy the right of ill-treating any of God's creatures.

We should never in any way consent to the ill-treatment of animals, because the fear of ridicule, or some other fear, prevents our interfering. As to there being anything really trifling in any act of humanity, however slight, it is moral blindness to suppose so. The few moments in the course of each day which a man absorbed in some worldly pursuit may carelessly expend in kind words or trifling charities to those around him, and kindness to an animal is one of these, are perhaps, in the sight of Heaven, the only time that he has lived to any purpose worthy of recording.

DOMESTIC RULE.

TACITUS says of Agricola, that "he governed his family, which many find to be a harder task than to govern a province." And the worst of this difficulty is, that its existence is frequently unperceived, until it comes to be pressingly felt.

For, either a man thinks that he must needs under-

stand those whom he sees daily, and also, perhaps, that it is no great matter whether he understand them or not, if he is resolved to do his duty by them : or he believes that in domestic rule there is much license, and that each occasion is to be dealt with by some law made at the time, or after : or he imagines that any domestic matter which he may leave to-day omitted or ill-done can be repaired at his leisure, when the concerns of the outer world are not so pressing as they are at present.

But each day brings its own duties, and carries them along with it ; and they are as waves broken on the shore, many like them coming after but none ever the same. And amongst all his duties, as there are none in which a man acts more by himself and can do more harm with less outcry from the world, so there are none requiring more forethought and watchfulness than those which arise from his domestic relations. Nor can there be a reasonable hope of his fulfilling those duties while he is ignorant of the feelings, however familiar he may be with the countenances, of those around him.

The extent and power of domestic rule are very great ; but this is often overlooked by the persons who possess it ; and they are rather apt to underrate the influence of their own authority. They can hardly imagine how strongly it is felt by others, unless they see it expressed in something outward. The effects of this mistake are often increased by another, which comes into operation when men are dealing with their inferiors in rank and

education : in which case, they are rather apt to fancy that the natural sense of propriety, which would put the right limit to familiar intercourse, belongs only to the well-educated or the well-born. And from either of these causes, or both united, they are led, perhaps, to add to their authority by a harshness not their own, rather than to impair it, as they fancy, by that degree of freedom which they must allow to those around them, if they would enter into their feelings and understand their dispositions. Perhaps there are some persons who think that they can manage very well without this familiar intercourse : and certainly there is but little occasion for knowing much about the nature of those whom you intend only to restrain. Coercion, however, is but a small part of government.

We should always be most anxious to avoid provoking the rebel spirit of the will in those who are intrusted to our guidance : we should not attempt to tie them up to their duties, like galley-slaves to their labour. We should be very careful that, in our anxiety to get the outward part of an action performed to our mind, we do not destroy that germ of spontaneousness which could alone give any significance to the action. God has allowed free will to man, for the choice of good or evil ; and is it likely that it is left to us to make our fellow-creatures virtuous by word of command ? We may insist upon a routine of proprieties being performed with soldierlike precision ; but there is no drilling of men's hearts.

It is a great thing to maintain the just limits of domestic authority, and to place it upon its right foundation. You cannot make reason conform to it. It may be fair to insist upon a certain thing being done, but not that others should agree with you in saying that it is the best thing that could have been done; for there cannot be a shorter way of making them hypocritical. Your submitting the matter at all to their judgments may be gratuitous; but if you do so, you must remember that the Courts of Reason recognise no difference of persons. Your wishes may fairly outweigh their arguments: but this of course is foreign to the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the thing itself, considered independently.

Domestic Rule is founded upon truth and love. If it has not both of these, it is nothing better than a despotism.

It requires the perpetual exercise of love in its most extended form. You have to learn the dispositions of those under you, and to teach them to understand yours. In order to do this, you must sympathise with them, and convince them of your doing so; for upon your sympathy will often depend their truthfulness. Thus, you must persuade a child to place confidence in you, if you wish to form an open upright character. You cannot terrify it into habits of truth. On the contrary, are not its earliest falsehoods caused by fear much oftener than from a wish to obtain any of its little ends by deceit?

How often the complaint is heard from those in domestic authority that they are not confided in ! But they forget how hard it is for an inferior to confide in a superior, and that he will scarcely venture to do so without the hope of some sympathy on the part of the latter ; and the more so, as half our confidences are about our follies, or what we deem such.

Every one who has paid the slightest attention to this subject knows that domestic rule is built upon justice, and therefore upon truth ; but it may not have been observed what evils will arise from even a slight deviation into conventionality. For instance, there is a common expression about "overlooking trifles." But what many persons should say, when they use this expression, is,—That they affect not to observe something, when there is no reason why they should not openly recognise it. Thus they contrive to make matters of offence out of things which really have no harm in them. Or the expression means that they do not care to take notice of something which they really believe to be wrong ; and as it is not of much present annoyance to them, they persuade themselves that it is not of much harm to those who practise it. In either case, it is their duty to look boldly at the matter. The greater quantity of truth and distinctness you can throw into your proceedings, the better. Connivance creates uncertainty, and gives an example of slyness ; and very often you will find that you connive at some practice, merely because you have not made up your mind whether it is right or wrong,

and you wish to spare yourself the trouble of thinking. All this is falsehood.

Whatever you allow in the way of pleasure or of liberty, to those under your control, you should do it heartily : you should recognise it entirely, encourage it, and enter into it. If, on the contrary, you do not care for their pleasures, or sympathise with their happiness, how can you expect to obtain their confidence? And when you tell them that you consult their welfare, they look upon it as some abstract idea of your own. They will doubt whether you can know what is best for them, if they have good reason for thinking that you are likely to leave their particular views of happiness entirely out of the account.

We come next to consider some of the various means which may be made use of in Domestic Rule.

Of course it is obvious that his own example must be the chief means in any man's power, by which he can illustrate and enforce those duties which he seeks to impress upon his household.

Next to this, praise and blame are among the strongest means which he possesses ; and they should not depend upon his humour. He should not throw a bit of praise at his dependants by way of making up for a previous display of anger not warranted by the occasion.

Ridicule is in general to be avoided ; not that it is inefficient, perhaps, for the present purpose ; but because it tends to make a poor and world-fearing character. It

is too strong a remedy ; and can seldom be applied with such just precision as to neutralise the evil aimed at, without destroying, at the same time, something that is good.

Still less should it ever appear that ridicule is directed against that which is good in itself, or which may be the beginning of goodness. There is, perhaps, more gentleness required in dealing with the infant virtues, than even with the vices, of those under our guidance. We should be very kind to any attempt at amendment. An idle sneer, or a look of incredulity, has been the death of many a good resolve. We should also be very cautious in reminding those who now would fain be wiser, of their rash sayings of evil, of their early and uncharitable judgments of others ; otherwise we run a great risk of hardening them in evil. This is especially to be guarded against with the young ; for never having felt the mutability of all human things, nor having lived long enough to discover that his former certainties are among the strangest things which a man looks back upon in the vista of the past : not perceiving that time is told by that pendulum, man, which goes backwards and forwards in its progress ; nor dreaming that the way to some opinions may lie through their opposites ; they are mightily ashamed of inconsistency, and may be made to look upon reparation as a crime.

The following are some general maxims which may be of service to any one in domestic authority.

The first is to make as few crimes as he can : and not to lay down those rules of practice, which, from a careful observation of their consequences, he has ascertained to be salutary, as if they were so many innate truths which all persons alike must at once, and fully, comprehend.

Let him not attempt to regulate other people's pleasures by his own tastes.

In commanding, it will not always be superfluous for him to reflect whether the thing commanded is possible.

In punishing, he should not consult his anger ; nor in remitting punishment, his ease.

Let him consider whether any part of what he is inclined to call disobedience may have resulted from an insufficient expression of his own wishes.

He should be inclined to trust largely.

ADVICE.

ADVICE is sure of a hearing when it coincides with our previous conclusions, and therefore comes in the shape of praise or of encouragement. It is not unwelcome when we derive it for ourselves, by applying the moral of some other person's life to our own, though the points of resemblance which bring it home may be far from flattering, and the advice itself far from palatable. We can even endure its being addressed to us by another, when it is interwoven with regret at some error, not of ours, but of his ; and when we see that he throws in a

little advice to us, by way of introducing, with more grace, a full recital of his own misfortunes.

But in general it is with advice as with taxation : we can endure very little of either, if they come to us in the direct way. They must not thrust themselves upon us. We do not understand their knocking at our doors ; besides, they always choose such inconvenient times, and are for ever talking of arrears.

There is a wide difference between the advice which is thrust upon you, and that which you have to seek for ; the general carelessness of the one, and the caution of the other, are to be taken into account. In sifting the latter, you must take care to separate the decorous part of it. I mean all that which the adviser puts in, because he thinks the world would expect it from a person of his character and station—all that which was to sound well to a third party, of whom, perhaps, the adviser stands somewhat in awe. You cannot expect him to neglect his own safety. The oracles will Philippise, as long as Philip is the master : but still they have an inner meaning for Athenian ears.

It is a disingenuous thing to ask for *advice*, when you mean *assistance* ; and it will be a just punishment if you get that which you pretended to want. There is a still greater insincerity in affecting to care about another's advice, when you lay the circumstances before him only for the chance of his sanctioning a course which you had previously resolved on. This practice is noticed by

Rochefoucauld, who has also laid bare the falseness of those givers of advice who have hardly heard to the end of your story, before they have begun to think how they can advise upon it to their own interest or their own renown.

It is a maxim of prudence that when you advise a man to do something which is for your own interest as well as for his, you should put your own motive for advising him, full in view, with all the weight that belongs to it. If you conceal the interest which you have in the matter, and he should afterwards discover it, he will be resolutely deaf even to that part of the argument which fairly does concern himself. If the lame man had endeavoured to persuade his blind friend that it was pure charity which induced him to lend the use of his eyes, you may be certain that he never would have been carried home, though it was the other's interest to carry him.

To get extended views, you should consult with persons who differ from you in disposition, circumstances, and modes of thought. At the same time, the most practicable advice may often be obtained from those who are of a similar nature to yourself, or who understand you so thoroughly that they are sure to make their advice personal. This advice will contain sympathy ; for, as it has been said, a man always sympathises to a certain extent with what he understands. It will not, perhaps, be the soundest advice that can be given in the abstract, but it

may be that which you can best profit by ; for you may be able to act up to it with some consistency. This applies more particularly when the advice is wanted for some matter which is not of a temporary nature, and where a course of action will have to be adopted. It is observed in *The Statesman* with much truth, "Nothing can be for a man's interest in the long run which is not founded on his character."

For similar reasons, when you have to give advice, you should never forget whom you are addressing, and what is practicable for him. You should not look about for the wisest thing which can be said, but for that which your friend has the heart to undertake and the ability to accomplish. You must sometimes feel with him, before you can possibly think for him. There is more need of keeping this in mind, the greater you know the difference to be between your friend's nature and your own. Your advice should not degenerate into comparisons between what would have been your conduct, and what was your friend's. You should be able to take the matter up at the point at which it is brought to you. It is very well to go back, and to show him what might or what ought to have been done, if it throws any light upon what is to be done ; or if you have any other good purpose in such conversation. But remember that comment, however judicious, is not advice ; and that advice should always tend to something practicable.

The advice which we have been just speaking of, is of that kind which relates to points of conduct. If you

want to change a man's principles, you may have to take him out of himself, as it were ; to show him fully the intense difference between your own views and his, and to trace up that difference to its source. Your object is not to make him do the best with what he has, but to induce him to throw something away altogether.

There are occasions on which a man feels that he has so fully made up his mind that hardly anything could move him ; and at the same time, he knows that he shall meet with much blame from those whose good opinion is of value to him, if he acts according to that mind. Let him not think to break his fall by asking their advice beforehand. As it is, they will be severe upon him for not having consulted them ; but they will be outrageous, if, after having consulted them, he then acts in direct opposition to their counsel. Besides, they will not be so inclined to parade the fact of their not having been consulted, as they would of their having given judicious advice which was unhappily neglected. I am not speaking of those instances in which a man is bound to consult others, but of such as constantly occur, where his consulting them is a thing which may be expected, but is not due.

In seeking for a friend to advise you, look for uprightness in him, rather than for ingenuity. It frequently happens that all you want is moral strength. You can discern consequences well enough, but cannot make up

your mind to bear them. Let your Mentor also be a person of nice conscience, for such a one is less likely to fall into that error to which we are all so liable, of advising our friends to act with less forbearance, and with less generosity, than we should be inclined to show ourselves, if the case were our own. "If I were you" is a phrase often on our lips; but we take good care not to disturb our identity, not to quit the disengaged position of a bystander. We recommend the course we might pursue if we were acting for you in your absence, but such as you never ought to undertake in your own behalf.

Besides being careful for your own sake about the persons whom you go to for advice, you should be careful also for theirs. It is an act of selfishness unnecessarily to consult those who are likely to feel a peculiar difficulty or delicacy in being your advisers, and who perhaps had better not be informed at all about the matter.

SECRECY.

FOR once that secrecy is formally imposed upon you, it is implied a hundred times by the concurrent circumstances. All that your friend says to you, as to his friend, is entrusted to you only. Much of what a man tells you in the hour of affliction, in sudden anger, or in any outpouring of his heart, should be sacred. In his craving for sympathy, he has spoken to you as to his own soul.

To repeat what you have heard in social intercourse is sometimes a sad treachery ; and when it is not treacherous, it is often foolish. For you commonly relate but a part of what has happened, and even if you are able to relate that part with fairness, it is still as likely to be misconstrued as a word of many meanings, in a foreign tongue, without the context.

There are few conversations which do not imply some degree of mutual confidence, however slight. And in addition to that which is said in confidence, there is generally something which is peculiar, though not confidential; which is addressed to the present company alone, though not confided to their secrecy. It is meant for them, or for persons like them, and they are expected to understand it rightly. So that when a man has no scruple in repeating all that he hears to anybody that he meets, he pays but a poor compliment to himself ; for he seems to take it for granted that what was said in his presence, would have been said, in the same words, at any time, aloud, and in the market-place. In short, that he is the average man of mankind ; which I doubt much whether any man would like to consider himself.

On the other hand, there is an habitual and unmeaning reserve in some men, which makes secrets without any occasion ; and it is the least to say of such things that they are needless. Sometimes it proceeds from an innate shyness or timidity of disposition ; sometimes from a temper naturally suspicious ; or it may be the result of having been frequently betrayed or oppressed. From

whatever cause it comes, it is a failing. As cunning is some men's strength, so this sort of reserve is some men's prudence. The man who does not know when, or how much, or to whom to confide, will do well in maintaining a Pathagorean silence. It is his best course. I would not have him change it on any account; I only wish him not to mistake it for wisdom.

That happy union of frankness and reserve which is to be desired, comes not by studying rules, either for candour or for caution. It results chiefly from an uprightness of purpose enlightened by a profound and delicate care for the feelings of others. This will go very far in teaching us what to confide, and what to conceal in our own affairs; what to repeat, and what to suppress in those of other people. The stone in which nothing is seen, and the polished metal which reflects all things, are both alike hard and insensible.

When a matter is made public, to proclaim that it had ever been confided to your secrecy may be no trifling breach of confidence: and it is the only one which is then left for you to commit.

With respect to the kind of people to be trusted, it may be observed that grave proud men are very safe confidants: and that those persons, who have ever had to conduct any business in which secrecy was essential, are likely to acquire a habit of reserve for all occasions.

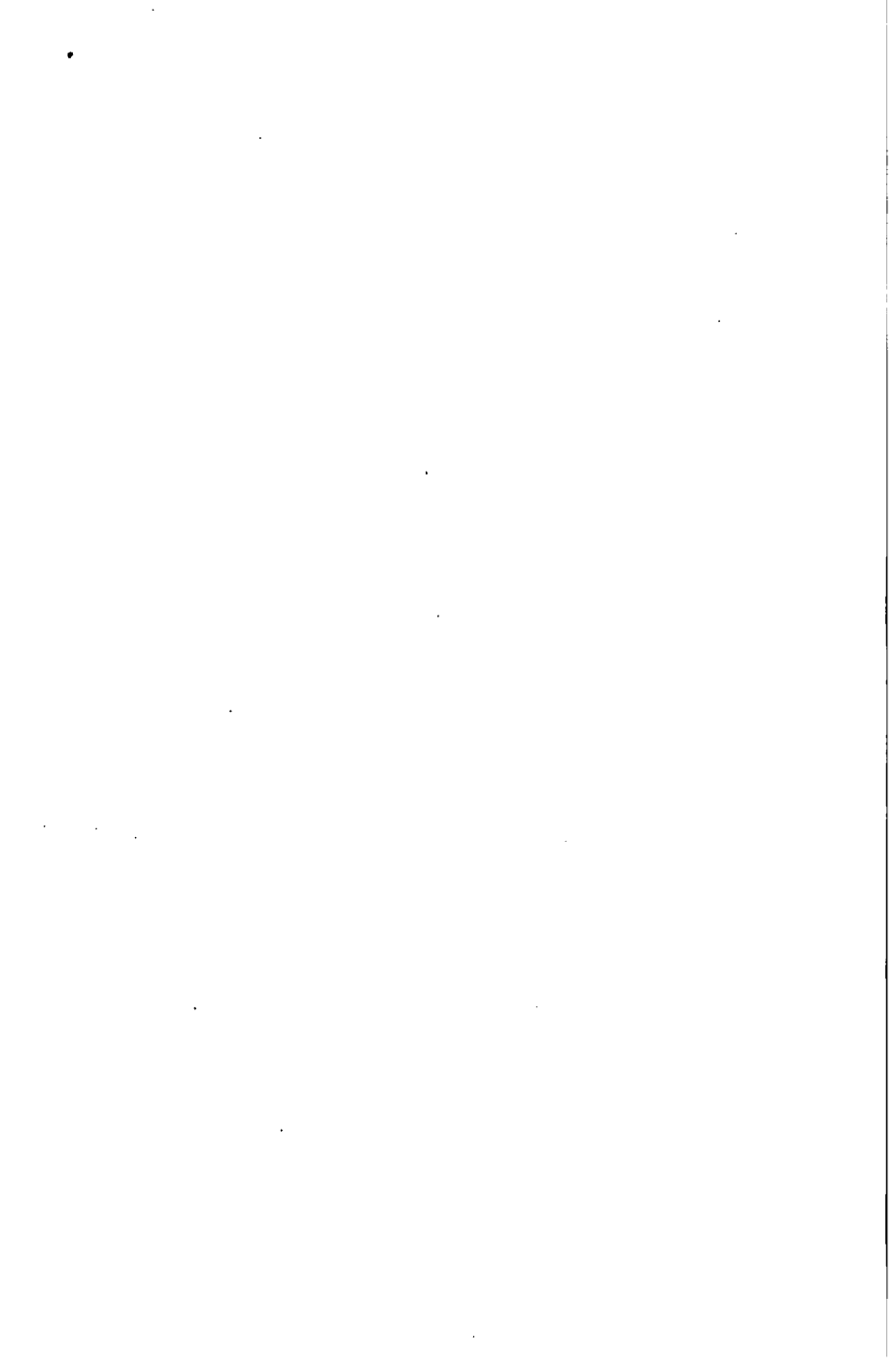
On the other hand, it is a question whether a secret will escape sooner by means of a vain man or a simpleton. There are some people who play with a secret until at last it is suggested by their manner to some shrewd person who knows a little of the circumstances connected with it. There are others whom it is unsafe to trust : not that they are vain, and so wear the secret as an ornament ; not that they are foolish, and so let it drop by accident ; not that they are treacherous, and sell it for their own advantage. But they are simple-minded people, with whom the world has gone smoothly, who would not themselves make any mischief of the secret which they disclose, and therefore do not see what harm can come of telling it.

Before you make any confidence, you should consider whether the thing you wish to confide is of weight enough to be a secret. Your small secrets require the greatest care. Most persons suppose that they have kept them sufficiently when they have been silent about them for a certain time ; and this is hardly to be wondered at, if there is nothing in their nature to remind a person that they were told to him as secrets.

There is sometimes a good reason for using concealment even with your dearest friends. It is that you may be less liable to be reminded of your anxieties when you have resolved to put them aside. Few persons have tact enough to perceive when to be silent, and when to offer you counsel or condolence.

You should be careful not to entrust another unnecessarily with a secret which it may be a hard matter for him to keep, and which may expose him to somebody's displeasure, when it is hereafter discovered that he was the object of your confidence. Your desire for aid, or for sympathy, is not to be indulged by dragging other people into your misfortunes.

There is as much responsibility in imparting your own secrets, as in keeping those of your neighbour.



THE SECOND PART

"THE wisdom touching negotiation or business hath not been hitherto collected into writing, to the great derogation of learning, and the professors of learning. For from this root springeth chiefly that note or opinion, which by us is expressed in adage to this effect, 'that there is no great concurrence between learning and wisdom.' For of the three wisdoms which we have set down to pertain to civil life, for wisdom of behaviour, it is by learned men for the most part despised, as an inferior to virtue, and an enemy to meditation; for wisdom of government, they acquit themselves well when they are called to it, but that happeneth to few; but for the wisdom of business, wherein man's life is most conversant, there be no books of it, except some few scattered advertisements, that have no proportion to the magnitude of this subject. For if books were written of this, as the other, I doubt not but learned men with mean experience would far excel men of long experience without learning, and outshoot them in their own bow."

BACON'S *Advancement of Learning*.

PART II.

ON THE EDUCATION OF A MAN OF BUSINESS.

THE essential qualities for a man of business are of a moral nature ; these are to be cultivated first. He must learn betimes to love truth. That same love of truth will be found a potent charm to bear him safely through the world's entanglement—I mean safely in the most worldly sense. Besides, the love of truth not only makes a man act with more simplicity, and therefore with less chance of error ; but it conduces to the highest intellectual development. The following passage in *The Statesman* gives the reason : “The correspondencies of wisdom and goodness are manifold ; and that they will accompany each other is to be inferred, not only because men’s wisdom makes them good, but also because their goodness makes them wise. Questions of right and wrong are a perpetual exercise of the faculties of those who are solicitous as to the right and wrong of what they do and see ; and a deep interest of the heart in these questions carries with it a deeper cultivation

of the understanding than can be easily effected by any other excitement to intellectual activity."

What has just been said of the love of truth applies also to other moral qualities. Thus, charity enlightens the understanding quite as much as it purifies the heart. And indeed knowledge is not more girt about with power than goodness is with wisdom.

The next thing in the training of one who is to become a man of business will be for him to form principles; for without these, when thrown on the sea of action, he will be without rudder and compass. They are the best results of study. Whether it is history, or political economy, or ethics, that he is studying these principles are to be the reward of his labour. A principle resembles a law in the physical world; though it can seldom have the same certainty, as the facts which it has to explain and embrace do not admit of being weighed or numbered with the same exactness as material things. The principles which our student adopts at first may be unsound, may be insufficient, but he must not neglect to form some; and must only nourish a love of truth that will not allow him to hold to any, the moment that he finds them to be erroneous.

Much depends upon the temperament of a man of business. It should be hopeful, that it may bear him up against the faintheartedness, the folly, the falsehood, and the numberless discouragements which even a prosperous

man will have to endure. It should also be calm ; for else he may be driven wild by any great pressure of business, and lose his time, and his head in rushing from one unfinished thing, to begin something else. Now this wished-for conjunction of the calm and the hopeful is very rare. It is, however, in every man's power to study well his own temperament, and to provide against the defects in it.

A habit of thinking for himself is one which may be acquired by the solitary student. But the habit of deciding for himself, so indispensable to a man of business, is not to be gained by study. Decision is a thing that cannot be fully exercised until it is actually wanted. You cannot play at deciding. You must have realities to deal with.

It is true that the formation of principles, which has been spoken of before, requires decision ; but it is of that kind which depends upon deliberate judgment ; whereas, the decision which is wanted in the world's business must ever be within call, and does not judge so much as it foresees and chooses. This kind of decision is to be found in those who have been thrown early on their own resources, or who have been brought up in great freedom.

It would be difficult to lay down any course of study, not technical, that would be peculiarly fitted to form a man of business. He should be brought up in the

habit of reasoning closely: and to ensure this, there is hardly anything better for him than the study of geometry.

In any course of study to be laid down for him, something like universality should be aimed at, which not only makes the mind agile, but gives variety of information. Such a system will make him acquainted with many modes of thought, with various classes of facts, and will enable him to understand men better.

There will be a time in his youth which may, perhaps, be well spent in those studies which are of a metaphysical nature. In the investigation of some of the great questions of philosophy, a breadth and a tone may be given to a man's mode of thinking, which will afterwards be of signal use to him in the business of every-day life.

We cannot enter here into a description of the technical studies for a man of business; but I may point out that there are works which soften the transition from the schools to the world, and which are particularly needed in a system of education, like our own, consisting of studies for the most part remote from real life. These works are such as tend to give the student that interest in the common things about him which he has scarcely ever been called upon to feel. They show how imagination and philosophy can be woven into practical wisdom. Such are the writings of Bacon. His lucid order, his grasp of the subject, the comprehensiveness of his views, his knowledge of mankind—the greatest perhaps that

has ever been distinctly given out by any uninspired man—the practical nature of his purposes, and his respect for anything of human interest, render Bacon's works unrivalled in their fitness to form the best men for the conduct of the highest affairs.

It is not, however, so much the thing studied, as the manner of studying it. Our student is not intended to become a learned man, but a man of business ; not a "full man," but a "ready man." He must be taught to arrange and express what he knows. For this purpose let him employ himself in making digests, arranging and classifying materials, writing narratives, and in deciding upon conflicting evidence. All these exercises require method. He must expect that his early attempts will be clumsy ; he begins, perhaps, by dividing his subject in any way that occurs to him, with no other view than that of treating separate portions of it separately ; he does not perceive, at first, what things are of one kind, and what of another, and what should be the logical order of their following. But from such rude beginnings, method is developed ; and there is hardly any degree of toil for which he would not be compensated by such a result. He will have a sure reward in the clearness of his own views, and in the facility of explaining them to others. People bring their attention to the man who gives them most profit for it ; and this will be one who is a master of method.

Our student should begin soon to cultivate a fluency

in writing—I do not mean a flow of words, but a habit of expressing his thoughts with accuracy, with brevity, and with readiness; which can only be acquired by practice early in life. You find persons who, from neglect in this part of their education, can express themselves briefly and accurately, but only after much care and labour. And again, you meet with others who cannot express themselves accurately, although they have method in their thoughts, and can write with readiness; but they have not been accustomed to look at the precise meaning of words: and such people are apt to fall into the common error of indulging in a great many words, as if it were from a sort of hope that some of them might be to the purpose.

In the style of a man of business nothing is to be aimed at but plainness and precision. For instance, a close repetition of the same word for the same thing need not be avoided. The aversion to such repetitions may be carried too far in all kinds of writing. In literature, however, you are seldom brought to account for misleading people; but in business you may soon be called upon to pay the penalty for having shunned the word which would exactly have expressed your meaning.

I cannot conclude this essay better than by endeavouring to describe what sort of person a consummate man of business should be.

He should be able to fix his attention on details, and be ready to give every kind of argument a hearing. This will not encumber him, for he must have been

practised beforehand in the exercise of his intellect, and be strong in principles. One man collects materials together, and there they remain, a shapeless heap; another, possessed of method, can arrange what he has collected; but such a man as I would describe, by the aid of principles, goes farther, and builds with his materials.

He should be courageous. The courage, however, required in civil affairs, is that which belongs rather to the able commander than the mere soldier. But any kind of courage is serviceable.

Besides a stout heart, he should have a patient temperament, and a vigorous but disciplined imagination; and then he will plan boldly, and with large extent of view, execute calmly, and not be stretching out his hand for things not yet within his grasp. He will let opportunities grow before his eyes, until they are ripe to be seized. He will think steadily over possible failure, in order to provide a remedy or a retreat. There will be the strength of repose about him.

He must have a deep sense of responsibility. He must believe in the power and vitality of truth, and in all he does or says should be anxious to express as much truth as possible.

His feeling of responsibility and love of truth will almost inevitably endow him with diligence, accuracy, and discreteness,—those commonplace requisites for a good man of business, without which all the rest may never come to be “translated into action.”

ON THE TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS.

THIS subject may be divided into two parts. 1. Dealing with others about Business. 2. Dealing with the Business itself.

1. *Dealing with others about Business.*

THE first part of the general subject embraces the choice and management of agents, the transaction of business by means of interviews, the choice of colleagues and the use of councils. Each of these topics will be treated separately. There remain, however, certain general rules with respect to our dealings with others which may naturally find a place here.

In your converse with the world avoid anything like a juggling dexterity. The proper use of dexterity is to prevent your being circumvented by the cunning of others. It should not be aggressive.

Concessions and compromises form a large and a very important part of our dealings with others. Concessions must generally be looked upon as distinct defeats; and you must expect no gratitude for them. I am far from saying that it may not be wise to make concessions, but this will be done more wisely when you understand the nature of them.

In making compromises, do not think to gain much by concealing your views and wishes. You are as likely

to suffer from its not being known how to please or satisfy you, as from any attempt to overreach you grounded on a knowledge of your wishes.

Delay is in some instances to be adopted advisedly. It sometimes brings a person to reason when nothing else could ; when his mind is so occupied with one idea, that he completely over-estimates its relative importance. He can hardly be brought to look at the subject calmly by any force of reasoning. For this disease time is the only doctor.

A good man of business is very watchful, over both himself and others, to prevent things from being carried against his sense of right in moments of lassitude. After a matter has been much discussed, whether to the purpose or not, there comes a time when all parties are anxious that it should be settled ; and there is then some danger of the handiest way of getting rid of the matter being taken for the best.

It is often worth while to bestow much pains in gaining over foolish people to your way of thinking : and you should do it soon. Your reasons will always have some weight with the wise. But if at first you omit to put your arguments before the foolish, they will form their prejudices ; and a fool is often very consistent, and very fond of repetition. He will be repeating his folly in season and out of season, until at last it has a hearing ;

and it is hard if it does not sometimes chime in with external circumstances.

A man of business should take care to consult occasionally with persons of a nature quite different from his own. To very few are given all the qualities requisite to form a good man of business. Thus a man may have the sternness and the fixedness of purpose so necessary in the conduct of affairs, yet these qualities prevent him, perhaps, from entering into the characters of those about him. He is likely to want tact. He will be unprepared for the extent of versatility and vacillation in other men. But these defects and oversights might be remedied by consulting with persons whom he knows to be possessed of the qualities supplementary to his own. Men of much depth of mind can bear a great deal of counsel; for it does not easily deface their own character, nor render their purposes indistinct.

2. *Dealing with the Business itself.*

The first thing to be considered in this division of the subject is the collection and arrangement of your materials. Do not fail to begin with the earliest history of the matter under consideration. Be careful not to give way to any particular theory, while you are merely collecting materials, lest it should influence wisely in the choice of them. You must work for yourself or what you reject may be as important for you to discuss, seen and thought about, as what you adopt; because it gives you a command of

the subject, and a comparative fearlessness of surprise, which you will never have if you rely on other people for your materials. In some cases, however, you may save time by not labouring much, beforehand, at parts of the subject which are nearly sure to be worked out in discussion.

When you have collected and arranged your information, there comes the task of deciding upon it. To make this less difficult, you must use method, and practise economy in thinking. You must not weary yourself by considering the same thing in the same way ; just oscillating over it, as it were ; seldom making much progress, and not marking the little that you have made. You must not lose your attention in reveries about the subject ; but must bring yourself to the point by such questions as these, What has been done ? What is the state of the case at present ? What can be done next ? What ought to be done ? Express in writing the answers to your questions. Use the pen—there is no magic in it, but it prevents the mind from staggering about. It forces you to methodise your thoughts. It enables you to survey the matter with a less tired eye. Whereas in thinking vaguely, you not only lose time, but you acquire a familiarity with the husk of the subject, which is absolutely injurious. Your apprehension becomes dull ; you establish associations of ideas which occur again and again to distract your attention ; and you become more tired than if you had really been employed in mastering the subject.

When you have arrived at your decision, you have to consider how you shall convey it. In doing this, be sure that you very rarely, if ever, say anything which is not immediately relevant to the subject. Beware of indulging in maxims, in abstract propositions, or in anything of that kind. Let your subject fill the whole of what you say. Human affairs are so wide, subtle, and complicated, that the most sagacious man had better content himself with pronouncing upon those points alone upon which his decision is called for.

It will often be a nice question whether or not to state the motives for your decisions. Much will depend upon the nature of the subject, upon the party whom you have to address, and upon your power of speaking out the whole truth. When you can give all your motives, it will in most cases be just to others, and eventually good for yourself, to do so. If you can only state some of them, then you must consider whether they are likely to mislead, or whether they tend to the full truth. And for your own sake there is this to be considered in giving only a part of your reasons: that those which you give are generally taken to be the whole, or at any rate, the best that you have. And, hereafter, you may find yourself precluded from using an argument which turns out to be a very sound one, which had great weight with you, but which you were at the time unwilling, or did not think it necessary, to put forward.

When you have to communicate the motives for an unfavourable decision, you will naturally study how to

convey them so as to give least pain, and to ensure least discussion. These are not unworthy objects ; but they are immediate ones, and therefore likely to have their full weight with you. Beware that your anxiety to obtain them does not carry you into an implied falsehood ; for, to say the least of it, evil is latent in that. Each day's converse with the world ought to confirm us in the maxim that a bold but not unkind sincerity should be the groundwork of all our dealings.

It will often be necessary to make a general statement respecting the history of some business. It should be lucid, yet not overburdened with details. It must have method not merely running through it, but visible upon it—it must have method in its form. You must build it up, beginning at the beginning, giving each part its due weight, and not hurrying over those steps which happen to be peculiarly familiar to yourself. You must thoroughly enter into the ignorance of others, and so avoid forestalling your conclusions. The best teachers are those who can seem to forget what they know full well ; who work out results, which have become axioms in their minds, with all the interest of a beginner, and with footsteps no longer than his.

It is a good practice to draw up, and put on record, an abstract of the reasons upon which you have come to a decision on any complicated subject ; so that if it is referred to, there is but little labour in making yourself

master of it again. Of course this practice will be more or less necessary, according as your decision has been conveyed with a reserved or with a full statement of the reasons upon which it was grounded.

Of all the correspondence you receive, a concise record should be kept; which should also contain a note of what was done upon any letter, and of where it was sent to, or put away. Documents relating to the same subject should be carefully brought together. You should endeavour to establish such a system of arranging your papers, as may ensure their being readily referred to, and yet not require too much time and attention to be carried into daily practice. Facsimiles should be kept of all the letters which you send out.

These seem little things: and so they are, unless you neglect them.

ON THE CHOICE AND MANAGEMENT OF AGENTS.

THE choice of agents is a difficult matter, but any labour that you may bestow upon it is likely to be well repaid; for you have to choose persons for whose faults you are to be punished; to whom you are to be the whipping-boy.

In the choice of an agent, it is not sufficient to ascertain what a man knows, or to make a catalogue of his qualities; but you have to find out how he will perform

a particular service. You may be right in concluding that such an office requires certain qualities, and you may discern that such a man possesses most of them; and in the absence of any means of making a closer trial, you may have done the best that you could do. But some deficiency, or some untoward combination of these qualities, may unfit him for the office. Hence the value of any opportunity, however slight, of observing his conduct in matters similar to those for which you want him.

Our previous knowledge of men will sometimes mislead us entirely, even when we apply it to circumstances but little different, as we think, from those in which we have actually observed their behaviour. For instance, you might naturally imagine that a man who shows an irritable temper in his conversation, is likely to show a similar temper throughout the conduct of his business. But experience does not confirm this; for you will often find that men who are intemperate in speech are cautious in writing.

The best agents are, in general, to be found amongst those persons who have a strong sense of responsibility. Under this feeling a man will be likely to grudge no pains; he will pay attention to minute things; and what is of much importance, he will prefer being considered ever so stupid, rather than pretend to understand his orders before he does so.

You should behave to your subordinate agents in such

a manner that they should not be afraid to be frank with you. They should be able to comment freely upon your directions, and may thus become your best counsellors. For those who are entrusted with the execution of any work, are likely to see things which have been overlooked by the person who designed it, however sagacious he may be.

You must not interfere unnecessarily with your agents, as it gives them the habit of leaning too much upon you. Sir Walter Scott says of Canning: "I fear he works himself too hard, under the great error of trying to do too much with his own hand, and to see everything with his own eyes. Whereas the greatest general and the first statesman must, in many cases, be content to use the eyes and fingers of others, and hold themselves contented with the exercise of the greatest care in the choice of implements." Most men of vigorous minds and nice perceptions will be apt to interfere too much; but it should always be one of the chief objects of a person in authority to train up those around him to do without him. He should try to give them some self-reliance. It should be his aim to create a standard as to the way in which things ought to be done—not to do them all himself. That standard is likely to be maintained for some time, in case of his absence, illness, or death; and it will be applied daily to many things that must be done without a careful inspection on his part, even when he is in full vigour.

With respect to those agents whom you employ to represent you, your inclination should be to treat them with hearty confidence. In justice to them, as well as for your own sake, the limits which you lay down for their guidance should be precise. Within those limits you should allow them a large discretionary power. You must be careful not to blame your agent for departing from your orders, when in fact the discrepancy which you notice is nothing more than the usual difference in the ways in which different men set about the same object, even when they employ similar means for its accomplishment. For a difference of this kind you should have been prepared. But if you are in haste to blame your representative, your captiousness may throw a great burden upon him unnecessarily. It is not the success of the undertaking only that he will thenceforward be intent upon : he will be anxious that each step should be done exactly after your fancy. And this may embarrass him, render him indecisive, and lead to his failing altogether.

The surest way to make agents do their work is to show them that their efforts are appreciated with nicety. For this purpose, you should not only be very careful in your promotions and rewards ; but in your daily dealings with them, you should beware of making slight or haphazard criticisms on any of their proceedings. Your praise should not only be right in the substance, but put upon the right foundation ; it should point to their most

strenuous and most judicious exertion. I do not mean that it should always be given at the time of those exertions being made, but it should show that they had not passed by unnoticed.

ON THE TREATMENT OF SUITORS.

THE maxim, "*Pars beneficii est, quod petitur si bene negetur*," is misinterpreted by many people. They construe "*bene*" *kindly*, which is right: but they are inclined to fancy that this kindness consists in courtesy, rather than in explicitness and truth.

You should be very loth to encourage expectations in a suitor, which you have not then the power of fulfilling, or of putting in a course of fulfilment;—for Hope, an architect above rules, can build, in reverse, a pyramid upon a point. From a very little origin there often arises a wildness of expectation which quite astounds you. Like the Fisherman in the "*Arabian Nights*," when you see "a genie twice as high as the greatest of giants," you may well wonder how he could have come out of so small a vessel; but in your case, there will be no chance of persuading the monster to ensconce himself again, for the purpose of convincing you that such a feat is not impossible.

In addition also to the natural delusions of hope, there is sometimes the artifice of pretending to take your words for more than they are well known to mean.

There is a deafness peculiar to suitors ; they should therefore be answered as much as possible in writing. The answers should be expressed in simple terms ; and all phrases should be avoided which are not likely to convey a clear idea to the man who hears them for the first time. There are many persons who really do not understand forms of writing which may have become common to you. When they find that courteous expressions mean nothing, they think that a wilful deception has been practised upon them. And in general, you should consider that people will naturally put the largest construction upon every ambiguous expression, and every term of courtesy which can be made to express anything at all in their favour.

It will often be necessary to see applicants ; and in this case you must bear in mind that you have not only the delusions of hope and the misinterpretation of language to contend against, but also the imperfection of men's memories. If possible, therefore, do not let the interview be the termination of the matter : let it lead to something in writing, so that you may have an opportunity of recording what you wished to express. Avoid a promising manner ; as people will be apt to find words for it. Do not resort to evasive answers for the purpose only of bringing the interview to a close ; nor shrink from giving a distinct denial, merely because the person to whom you ought to give it is before you, and you would have to witness any pain which it might occasion. Let not that balance of justice which Corrup-

tion could not alter one hair's breadth, be altogether disturbed by Sensibility.

To determine in what case the refusal of a suit should be accompanied by reasons, is a matter of considerable difficulty. It must depend very much on what portion of the truth you are able to bring forward. This was mentioned before as a general principle in the transaction of business, and it may be well to abide by it in answering applications. You will naturally endeavour to give somewhat of a detailed explanation when you are desirous of showing respect to the person whom you are addressing ; but if the explanation is not a sound or a complete one, it would be better to see whether the respect could not be shown in some other way.

In many cases, and especially when the suit is a mere project of effrontery, it will perhaps be prudent to refuse, without entering at all upon the grounds of your refusal. In an explanation addressed to the applicant, you will be apt to omit the special reasons for your refusal, as they are likely to be such as would mortify his self-love ; and so you lay yourself open to an accusation of unfairness, when he finds, perhaps, that you have selected some other person, who came as fully within the scope of your general objections as he did himself. Therefore, where you are not required, and do not like, to give special reasons, it may often be the best course simply to refuse, or to couch your refusal in impregnable generalities.

Remember that in giving any reason at all for refusing, you lay some foundation for a future request.

Those who have constantly to deal with suitors are in danger of giving way too much to disgust at the intrusion, importunity, and egotism, which they meet with. As an antidote to this, they should remember that the suit which is a matter of business to them, and which, perhaps, from its hopelessness, they look upon with little interest, seems to the suitor himself a thing of absorbing importance. And they should expect a man in distress to be as unreasonable as a sick person, and as much occupied by his own disorder.

INTERVIEWS.

THERE is much that cannot be done without interviews. It would often require great labour, not only on your part, but also on the part of others whom you cannot command, to effect by means of writing what may easily be accomplished in a single interview. The pen may be a surer, but the tongue is a nicer instrument. In talking, most men sooner or later show what is uppermost in their minds; and this gives a peculiar interest to verbal communications. Besides, there are looks, and tones and gestures, which form a significant language of their own. In short, interviews may be made very useful; and are, in general, somewhat hazardous things; but many people look upon them rather as the pastime of business than as a part of it requiring great discretion.

Interviews are perhaps of most value when they bring

together several conflicting interests or opinions, each of which has thus an opportunity of ascertaining the amount and variety of opposition which it must expect, and so is worn into moderation. It would take a great deal of writing to effect this.

Interviews are to be resorted to when you wish to prevent the other party from pledging himself upon a matter which requires much explanation ; where you see what will probably be his answer to your first proposition, and know that you have a good rejoinder, which you would wish him to hear before he commits himself by writing upon the subject. In cases of this kind, however, there is the similar danger of a man's talking himself into obstinacy before he has heard all that you have to say.

Interviews are very serviceable in those matters where you would at once be able to come to a decision, if you did but know the real inclination of the other parties concerned : and, in general, you should take care occasionally to see those with whom you are dealing, if the thing in question is likely to be much influenced by their individual peculiarities, and you require a knowledge of the men. Now this is the case with the greatest part of human affairs.

You frequently want verbal communication in order to encourage the timid, to settle the undecided, and to bring on some definite stage in the proceedings.

The above are instances in which interviews are to be sought for on their own account ; but they are sometimes

necessary, merely because people will not be satisfied without them. There are persons who can hardly believe that their arguments have been attended to, until they have had verbal evidence of the fact. They think that they could easily answer all your objections, and that they should certainly succeed in persuading you, if they had an opportunity of discussing the matter orally ; and it may be of importance to remove this delusion by an interview.

On the other hand, interviews are to be avoided when you have reasons which determine your mind, but which you cannot give to the other party. If you do accede to an interview, you are almost certain to be tempted into giving some reasons, and these not being the strong ones, will very likely admit of a fair answer ; and so, after much shuffling, you will be obliged to resort to an appearance of mere wilfulness at last.

You should also be averse to transacting business verbally with very eager, sanguine persons, unless you feel that you have sufficient force and readiness for it. There are people who do not understand any dissent or opposition on your part, unless it is made very manifest. They are fully prepossessed by their own views, and they go on talking as if you agreed with them. Perhaps you feel a delicacy in interrupting them, and undeceiving them at once. The time for doing so passes by ; and ever afterwards they quote you as an authority for all their folly. Or it ends by your going away pledged to

a course of conduct which is anything but what you approve.

But perhaps there are no interviews less to be sought after than those in which you have to appear in connection with one or two other parties who have exactly the same interest in the matter as your own, and must be supposed to speak your sentiments, but with whom you have had little or no previous communication ; or whose judgment you find that you cannot rely upon. In such a case you are continually in danger of being compromised by the indiscretion of any one of your associates. For you do not like to disown one of your own side before the adverse party ; or you are afraid of taking all the odium of opposition on yourself. You may perhaps be quite certain that your indiscreet ally would be as anxious as yourself to recall his words if he could perceive their consequences : but these are things which you cannot explain to him in that company.

The men who profit least by interviews are often those who are most inclined to resort to them. They are irresolute persons, who wish to avoid pledging themselves to anything, and so they choose an interview as the safest course which occurs to them. Besides it looks like progress : and makes them, as they say, see their way. Such persons, however, are very soon entangled in their own words, or they are oppressed by the earnest opinions of the people they meet. For to conduct an interview in the manner which they intend, would require them to have at command that courage and decision which

they never attain, without a long and miserly weighing of consequences.

Indolent persons are very apt to resort to interviews ; for it saves them the trouble of thinking steadily, and of expressing themselves with precision, which they are called upon to do if they come to write about the subject. Now they certainly may learn a great deal in a short time, and with very little trouble, by means of an interview ; but if they have to take up the position of an antagonist, of a judge, or indeed any but that of a learner, then it is very unsafe to indulge in an interview, without having prepared themselves for it.

To conduct an interview successfully, requires not only information and force of character, but also a certain intellectual readiness. People are so apt to think that there are but two ways in which a thing can terminate. They are ignorant of the number of combinations which even a few circumstances will admit of. And perhaps a proposal is made which they are totally unprepared for, and which they cannot deal with, from being unable to apprehend with sufficient quickness its main drift and consequences.

There are cases where the persons meeting are upon no terms of equality respecting the interview ; where one of them has a great deal to maintain, and the other nothing to lose. Such an instance occurs in the case of a minister receiving a deputation. He has the interests of the public to maintain, and the intentions of the Government to keep concealed. He has to show that he fully

understands the arguments laid before him ; and all the while to conceal his own bias, and to keep himself perfectly free from any pledge. Any member of the deputation may utter anything that he pleases without much harm coming of it ; but every word that the minister says is liable to be interpreted against him to the uttermost. There are similar occasions in private life, where a man has to act upon the defensive, and where the interview may be considered not as a battle, but as a siege. A man should then confine himself to few words. He should bring forward his strongest arguments only, and not state too many of them at a time : for he should keep a good force in reserve. Besides, it will be much more difficult for the other party to mystify and pervert a few arguments than a set speech. And he will leave them no room for gaining a semblance of victory by answering the unimportant parts of his statement.

Again, whatever readiness and knowledge of the subject he may possess, he should have somebody by him on his side. For he is opposed to numbers, and must expect that amongst them there will always be some one ready to meet his arguments, if not with argument, at any rate with the proper fallacies ; or at least that there will be some one stupid enough to commence replying without an answer. He should therefore have a person who should be able to aid him in replying ; and there will be a satisfaction in having somebody in the room who is not in a hostile position towards him. Besides he will want a witness : for he must not imagine that the num-

ber of his opponents is any safeguard against misrepresentation, but rather a cause, in most people, of less attention, and less feeling of responsibility. And lastly, the most precise man in the world, if he speaks much on any matter, may be glad to hear what was the impression upon another person's mind : in short, to see whether he conveyed exactly what he meant to convey.

The best precaution, however, which any man can take under these circumstances, is to state in writing, at the conclusion of the interview, the substance of what he apprehends to have been said, and of what he intends to do. This would require great readiness and the most earnest attention ; but in the end, it would save very much trouble and misapprehension. A similar practice might be adopted in most interviews of business where the subject would warrant such a formality. It would not only be good in itself, but its influence would be felt throughout the interview ; and people would come prepared, and would speak with precision, when there was an immediate prospect of their statements being recorded.

OF COUNCILS, COMMISSIONS,

AND, IN GENERAL, OF BODIES OF MEN CALLED
TOGETHER TO COUNSEL OR TO DIRECT.

SUCH bodies are the fly-wheels and safety-valves of the machinery of business. They are sometimes looked upon as superfluities, but by their means the

motion is equalised, and a great force is applied with little danger.

They are apt contrivances for obtaining an average of opinions, for ensuring freedom from corruption, and the reputation of that freedom. On ordinary occasions they are more courageous than most individuals. They can bear odium better. The world seldom looks to personal character as the predominating cause of any of their doings, though this is one of the first things which occurs to it when the public acts of any individual are in question. The very indistinctness which belongs to their corporate existence adds a certain weight to their decisions.

Councils are serviceable as affording some means of judging how things are likely to be generally received. It is seldom that any one person, however capable he may be of framing or of executing a good measure, can come to a satisfactory conclusion as to the various appearances which that measure will present, or can be made to present, to others. In some instances he may be so little under the influence of the common prejudices around him, as not to understand their force, and therefore not to perceive how a new thing will be received. Now, if he has the opportunity of consulting several persons together, he will not only have the advantage of their common sense and joint information, but he will also have a chance of hearing what will be the common nonsense of ordinary men upon the subject, and of providing as far as possible against it.

On the other hand, these bodies are much tempted by the division of responsibility to sloth ; and therefore to dealing with things superficially and inaccurately. Another evil is the want of that continuity of purpose in their proceedings which is to be found in those of an individual.

As it tends directly to diminish many of the advantages before mentioned, it is, in general, a wrong thing for a member of a council or commission to let the outer world know that his private opinion is adverse to any of the decisions of his colleagues ; or indeed to indicate the part, whatever it may have been, that he has taken in the transaction of the general body.

The proper number of persons to constitute such bodies must vary according to the purpose for which they are called together. Such a number as would afford any temptation for oratorical display should in general be avoided. Another limit, which it may be prudent to adopt, is to have only so many members as to make it possible in most cases for each to take a part in the proceedings. By having a greater number, you will not ensure more scrutiny into the business. It will still be done by a few : but with a feeling of less responsibility than if they were left to themselves, and with the interruptions and inconvenience arising from the number of persons present. Besides, the greater the number, the more likelihood there is of parties being formed in the council.

Whether the members are many or few, there should

be formalities, strictly maintained. This is essential in the conduct of business. Otherwise there will be such a state of things as that described by Pepys in his account of a meeting of the Privy Council; which, like most of his descriptions, one feels to be true to the life. "We to a Committee of the Council to discourse concerning pressing of men; but Lord! how they meet; never sit down: one comes, now another goes, then comes another; one complaining that nothing is done, another swearing that he hath been there these two hours and nobody come. At last my Lord Annesley says, 'I think we must be forced to get the King to come to every Committee; for I do not see that we do anything at any time but when he is here.'"

The great art of making use of councils, commissions, and such like bodies, is to know what kind of matter to put before them, and in what state to present it. "There be three parts of business, the preparation; the debate, or examination; and the perfection; whereof, if you look for dispatch, let the middle only be the work of many, and the first and the last the work of few."¹ There is likely to be a great waste of time and labour when a thing is brought in all its first vagueness to be debated or examined by a number of persons. And there will be much in the "preparation" and "perfection" of a matter which will only become confused by being submitted to a full assembly. You might as well think of making love by a council or a board. It should there-

¹ BACON'S *Essay on Dispatch*.

fore be the business of some one, either in the council or subordinate to it, to bring the matter forward in a distinct and definite shape. Otherwise there will be a wilderness of things said before you arrive at any legitimate point of discussion. And hence Bacon adds, "The proceeding upon somewhat conceived in writing doth for the most part facilitate despatch ; for though it should be wholly rejected, yet that negative is more pregnant of direction than an indefinite, as ashes are more generative than the dust."

In order to bring the responsibility of any act of the general body home to the individuals composing it, no method seems so good as that of requiring the signatures of a large proportion of the council or commission to the directions given in the matter. Even the most careless people have a sort of aversion to signing things which they have never considered. This plan is better than requiring the signatures of the whole body. For it is less likely to degenerate into a mere formality : and besides the other course would give any one crotchety man too great a power of hindrance.

The responsibility, also, of those persons who settle the details of a matter, whether secretaries, or committees of the council, should be clearly attested either by their signatures, or by a memorandum showing what part of the business has been entrusted to them.

As to the kind of men to be especially chosen or rejected, it would be trifling to lay down any minute rules.

You often require a diversity of natures, in order that the various modes of acting congenial to different minds and tempers should have an opportunity of being canvassed.

When a man's faults are those which come to the surface in social life, they must be noted as certain hindrances to his usefulness as a member of any of these bodies. A man may be proud or selfish, and yet a good councillor ; he may be secretly ill-tempered, and yet a reasonable man in his converse with the world, capable of bearing opposition, and an excellent coadjutor ; but if he is vain, or fond of disputes, or dictatorial, you know that his efficiency in a council must to a certain extent be counteracted.

Those men are the grace and strength of councils who are of that healthful nature which is content to take defeat with good humour, and of that practical turn of mind which makes them set heartily to work upon plans and propositions, which have been originated in opposition to their judgment ; who are not anxious to shift responsibility upon others : and who do not allude to their former objections with triumph, when those objections come to be borne out by the result. In acting with such persons you are at your ease. You counsel sincerely and boldly, and not with a timorous regard to your own part in the matter.

The men who have method, and, as it were, a judicial intellect, are most valuable councillors. Without some such in a council, a great deal of cleverness goes

for nothing : as there is nobody to see what has been stated and answered, to what their deliberations tend, and what progress has been made. Such persons can gather the sense of a mixed assembly, and suggest some line of action which may honestly meet the different views of the various members. They will bring back the subject-matter when it has all but floated away, while the others have been looking for sea-weed, or throwing stones at one another on the shore.

PARTY-SPIRIT.

PARTY-SPIRIT gives a pretext for the exercise of such scorn and malice as could not be tolerated, if they did not claim to have their origin in fervent wishes for the public welfare. It consumes in idle contests that energy which the State has need of. By the perpetual interchange of hard names it tends to make a people suspicious and uncharitable ; or it inclines them to think lightly of the kind of offences which they hear so often charged against their most eminent public men ; for it " gives them a habit of using epithets and affecting sensations of moral indignation which bear no proportion to the thing itself, or to their own real feelings about the thing ; of taking the names of Truth and Virtue in vain."

Under the influence of party-spirit, a nation sometimes acts towards its dependencies, and in its foreign relations,

not with the whole force of the country, but with a portion of it only, bearing some reference to the excess of strength in the ruling party.

Party-spirit makes people abjure independent thinking. It can leave nothing alone. It must uplift a hand in every man's quarrel, as a knight-errant of old, but with small sense of chivalry. It forces its odious friendship or its unprovoked hostility where neither is fitting. Even the wisest require to be constantly on their guard against it ; or its insidious prejudices, like dirt and insects on the glass of a telescope, will blur the view, and make them see strange monsters where there are none.

Party-spirit incites people to attack with rashness, and to defend without sincerity. Violent partisans are apt to treat a political opponent in such a manner, when they argue with him, as to make the question quite personal, as if he had been present, as it were, and a chief agent in all the crimes which they attribute to his party. Nor does the accused hesitate to take the matter upon himself, and, in fancied self-defence, to justify things which otherwise he would not hesitate, for one moment, to condemn.

These evils must not be allowed to take shelter under the unfounded supposition that party dealings are different from anything else in the world, and that they are to be governed by much looser laws than those which regulate any other human affairs. It is a very dangerous thing to acknowledge two sorts of truth, two kinds of charity.

Is there no harm in never looking farther than the worst motive that can possibly be imagined for the actions of our political adversaries? Are we to consider the opposite party as so many Samaritans; and is there nothing that we have ever heard or read, which should induce us to abate our Jewish antipathy to these brethren of ours who do not worship at our temple? This is an illustration from which political bigots cannot escape. Even their own pretensions of being always in the right will only bring the instance more home to them. The Jews were right about the matter in dispute between them and the Samaritans. "Salvation is with the Jews." But this is never held out to us as any justification of their behaviour.

To hear some men talk one would suppose that political distinctions were natural distinctions; and that they depended upon a man's personal qualities. These people seem to think that all the good are ranged in a row on one side, and all the bad on the other. Now the utmost that can reasonably be alleged is, that there exists in most men a predisposition to one or other of the two great parties which are to be found in every free country: but this cannot be depended upon as the cause which determines men in general to attach themselves to a party.

As it is, some range themselves on one side, and some on the other, just as they used to do in their school games, and with about as much reflection. A large number of persons, in all ranks, hold hereditary opinions. There

are thousands who make their convictions on all political subjects subservient to their feelings as members of a class, and to what they believe to be the interests of that class. Then there are those who think whatever the little mob in which they live pleases to think : and this is the most comfortable way of thinking. Direct self-interest decides some men. The merest accidents determine others. For instance, how much of a man's opinions through life will depend upon any strong-minded or earnest person that he may have lived with at a time when he was uninformed himself and malleable. Remember, too, that it requires but a slight bias to send a man into a party : for let him agree with it only in a few points, and he will be set down as belonging to it. Then, perhaps, he is called upon to act in some way or other politically, and a very little determines a man whose thoughts upon the subject altogether have been few and vague. Thus a political character is impressed upon him without his having had much to do in the matter ; but afterwards many things will probably occur to deepen that impression, and to make him a decided partisan.

A true analysis of the composition of parties would afford a good lesson of political tolerance. We should learn from it what a mixed thing a party is ; but there is no single law which will explain its cohesion ; and still less is there any good ground for insisting that the distinctions of party have their origin in moral worth or turpitude.

It is of importance that we should train ourselves to

make the fitting allowance for the political prejudices of others.

Pascal asks, "Whence comes it to pass that we have so much patience with those who are maimed in body, and so little with those who are defective in mind?" And he says, "It is because the cripple acknowledges that we have the use of our legs; whereas the fool obstinately maintains that we are the persons who halt in understanding. Without this difference in the case, neither object would move our resentment, but both our compassion." We might try to overlook this difference and find it an aid to charity to consider that men's prejudices are the same kind of things as their personal defects. Whether a man is labouring under some degree of physical deafness, or under some strong prejudice, which being ever by his side, is always sure of the first hearing, and produces a sort of numbness to anything else: it comes nearly to the same thing as regards the weight which he is likely to attach to any of our arguments, when adverse to his prejudice. In both cases the cause is decided without our being fully heard.

But at the same time that we have recourse to such views as the above, to moderate our impatience of other people's prejudices, we should keep a vigilant watch on our own. We often forget that we are partisans ourselves, and that we are contending with partisans. We first give ourselves credit for a judicial impartiality in all that concerns public affairs, and then call upon our opponents actually to be as impartial as we assert ourselves to be.

But few of us, I suspect, have any right to take this high ground. Our passions master us : and we know them to be our enemies. Our prejudices imprison us : and like madmen, we take our jailors for a guard of honour.

I do not mean to suggest that truth and right are always to be found in middle courses ; or that there is anything particularly philosophic in concluding that "both parties are in the wrong," and "that there is a great deal to be said on both sides of the question,"—phrases which may belong to indolence as well as to charity and candour. Let a man have a hearty strong opinion, and strive by all fair means to bring it into action—if it is, in truth, an opinion, and not a thing inhaled like some infectious disorder.

Many persons persuade themselves that the life and well-being of a State are something like their own fleeting health and brief prosperity. And hence they see portentous things in every subject of political dispute. Such fancies add much to the intolerance of party-spirit. But the State will bear much killing. It has outlived many generations of political prophets—and it may survive the present ones.

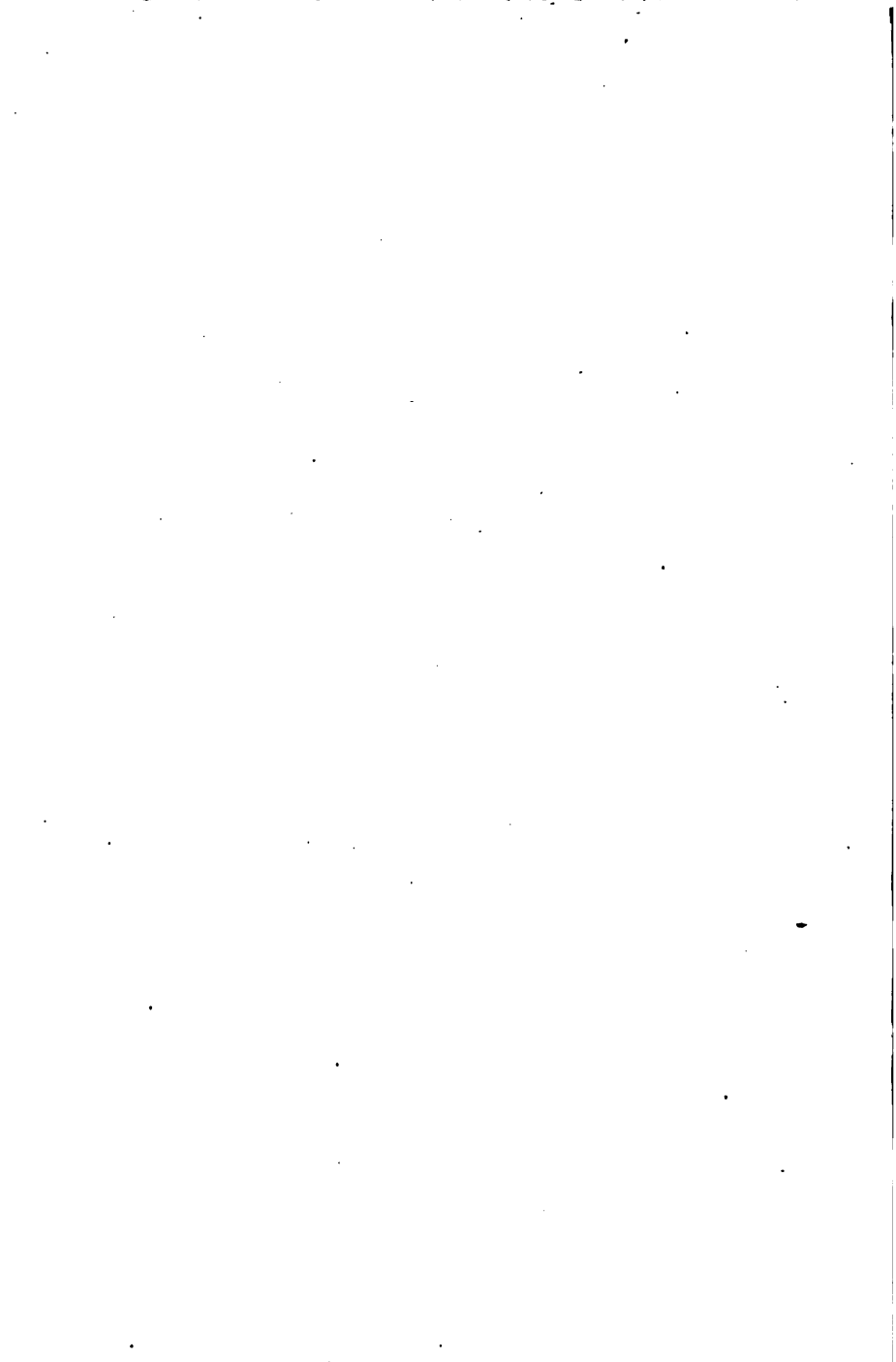
Divisions in a State are a necessary consequence of freedom ; and the practical question is not to dispense with party, but to make the most good of it. The contest must exist ; but it may have something of generosity in it. And how is this to be ? Not by the better kind

of men abstaining from any attention to politics, or shunning party connections altogether. Staying away from a danger which in many instances it is their duty to face, would be but a poor way of keeping themselves safe. It would be a doubtful policy to encourage political indifference as a cure for the evils of party-spirit, even if it were a certain cure ; but we cannot take this for granted, especially when we observe that the vices of party are not always to be seen most in those who have the most earnest political feelings. Indeed, the attachment to a party may be, and often is, an affection of the most generous kind : and it must, I think, be allowed, that even with men who do not discern the true end of party, nor its limits, party-spirit is often a rude kind of patriotism.

The question, then, is how to regulate party-spirit. Like all other affections, its tendency is to overspread the whole character. One who has nothing in his soul to resist it, or much that assimilates with its worst influences, is carried away by it to evil. But a good man will show the earnestness of his attachment to his party by his endeavour to elevate its character ; and in the utmost heat of party contests, he will try to maintain a love of truth, and a regard for the charities of life.



**AN ESSAY ON
ORGANIZATION IN DAILY LIFE**



INTRODUCTION.

ON as bright a morn as a poet's marriage-day should be, I went with a landscape-painter to see the spot which he had chosen for a picture of some water-meadows. I wished to compare the picture with the original; and hoped to make some criticisms which might prove suggestive to the artist, and might not be deemed utterly irrelevant by him. I know that, in general, artists are wont to think the criticisms of the laity rather weak and superfluous.

I admired my friend for having chosen as a subject for his picture one that might appear at first sight to be anything but picturesque. But it would be unpicturesque only to the man who had not yet learned to look earnestly and lovingly at Nature. The luxuriance and beauty of the water-weeds and of the bulrushes were wonderful, and would have given work to a pre-Raffaelite for a year. The grass, lapped by the bright water in its narrow channels, shone with an emerald green. The cattle browsed in rich contentment. A delicate sheeny mist, that quivered in the sunlight, was visible here and there in certain parts of the meadows. Silvery-looking insects darted hither and thither in the water-furrows. Alto-

gether, it was a scene which, in its microscopic beauty, offered to the naturalist and the artist almost as much to comment upon and to delight in, as the vast expanse of the heavens, in its sublime and mystic aspect, offers to the rapt astronomer pondering on their illimitable grandeur.

The meadows were skirted by a railroad ; and I was pleased to see that the artist had not shunned the railway, and had even had the audacity to introduce a train.

Very soon, however, I am ashamed to say, I wandered in thought from the picture, and began to compare in my mind the skilful workmanship of the water-meadows with that of the railway and the train. The water-meadows were an old invention, but an invention, we must admit, of great merit. Pharaohs and Ptolemies, the Copt, the Babylonian, the Indian, the Moor, came before me as men who had adopted this skilful mode of multiplying the resources of the earth ; and, descending the laden stream of time, I thought of the vast works of forgotten men who have laboured to embank the Thames and make it the serviceable river that it is to a great commercial nation.

I then thought of the immense improvement which irrigation admits of, but could not say that it was greater than that which might be effected in railway travelling. The truth is, that after the adoption of some great invention or discovery, there comes a lull in the exercise of human thought as applied to it. I then began to think that consummate organization is almost as rare a thing as high invention. And in some respects it is more

difficult, because it is more involved in the intricacies of human life and conduct. Agriculture, government, war, legislation, business, pleasure, passed before me in their different forms; and I thought how all-important was organization in each of these large branches of human endeavour.

It was in vain that the careful artist took me here and there; insisted upon my noticing this tint, and that shadow; and fell into ecstasies, to which I made but a poor response, about the loveliness of an old brick wall and a decayed wooden bridge. I had a thought that drove me like a goad; and I was not happy till I could get home and begin my essay on organization. I found, as one always does, that any large subject stretches out into all subjects; and that the difficulty is to reduce it into a presentable shape. I studied the men who were said to be skilful in organizing; and the result of all my labour was the following essay, a work of slight pretension, but one which may serve to elicit other disquisitions worthy of a subject so deep, various, and extensive, as organization.

ON ORGANIZATION IN DAILY LIFE.

Importance
of Organiza-
tion.

THERE is not an individual in the community whom it does not much concern that there should be, amongst his fellow-countrymen, persons especially skilled in the art of organization. Half the labour of the most laborious people in the world is either totally wasted, or is of such an imperfect character as to require much further labour; which evils need not have been if there had existed considerable skill in organizing. Moreover, the destruction of life, the loss of comfort, the waste of time, and the withering-up of enjoyment, which take place from a want of this skill, are almost incalculable.

If we were to seek what would be the perfection of organization in human affairs, we must turn to Nature, and see how she organizes—noticing how the cell contains in itself, potentially, all the powers of development towards perfection. And so, to a certain extent, might the beginnings of human undertakings be fashioned. In fact, that amount of skill and thought should be brought to bear upon them which would ensure, in future, the opportunity for full development.

The field for organization is very wide indeed, as it embraces most human affairs. It is difficult to give a

precise definition of the term. If we turn to Dr. Johnson, he tells us that an organization is a "construction in which the parts are so disposed as to be subservient to each other." And what we mean by a good organization is some construction in which the several parts are so deftly disposed, that, with the least expense of moral and material force, and in the shortest time, a given result is obtained. Take the subject of locomotion, for instance. The private individual consults his guides, his handbooks, and his railway lists, and plans his journey. But those who are to organize the means of locomotion have to provide for thousands of these individual journeys, even for millions, and so to arrange the modes of transit that all the conflicting interests of private individuals shall be duly considered, and the public be fully and fairly served. This, in the long run, will be found to coincide exactly with the interest of the body which has to organize locomotion.

The foregoing remark leads to a part of the subject which I think has often escaped notice in all departments of organization ; namely, that the organism requires to be looked at from a point of view quite different from that which the organizers are likely at first to take. They should look at it from the point of view that the persons most concerned in, or rather acted upon by, the organism are likely to take. For instance, in the levying and collecting of taxes, the most skilful financier will be the one who can throw himself, by imagination, into the position of the persons who are liable to pay any particular tax.

Definition of
Organiza-
tion.

Organisms
to be looked
at from
without.

Taxation.

There have been vexatious imposts in this country, as profitless as vexatious, which, I am convinced, would never have been proposed, or at least would never have been adopted, if statesmen had attained by experience, or by imagination, to an adequate notion of the inconvenience caused by these imposts. A similar assertion might be justly made with respect to the arrangements for railway travelling and for many other forms of organization. The shrewdest railway director, the one who will bring most grist to the mill, will be that man who, in considering the railway, makes himself most thoroughly one of the public, and learns to appreciate all the peculiar conveniences which each class travelling by the railway desires, and all the peculiar inconveniences which each class seeks to avoid. As he travels up and down the line, if he would only observe what it is that people want, and what it is that they dislike, he would bring more useful knowledge to the Board than could be gained in any other way. The same thing applies to military organization. The officer who looks at an army or a navy only from an officer's point of view, will never know how to make the most of either army or navy. And further, he must look beyond the organization in which he is included, and see how it is regarded from without.

Railway
traffic.

But, returning to railway affairs: throughout them there is a sad want of the organizing faculty. And yet what a reward there would be for the exercise of this faculty! If there were one organizing mind amongst those who direct the proceedings of any great railway, it

would devise plans of improvement that would inevitably be adopted by all the other railways. In almost all the details of railway management there is room for large improvement. The stations are often skilful models of inconvenience. The construction of the carriages admits of immense improvement. Even in a matter apparently so trifling as colour, much might be done that would avoid inconvenience and disaster. A dark colour is used where it is desirable that there should be a light one ; and uniformity of colour is chosen where there would be a manifest advantage in the use of variety. In these great concerns, where the comfort and safety of millions of people are concerned, nothing hardly is trifling, and everything that is done ought to be able to give a good account of itself, and offer a ready explanation of why it is so done. Could we find a person highly gifted with a talent of organization it would be a wise expenditure of money to offer that man many thousands of pounds, merely to tell us how he would regulate, if he had power, any one of the great railway thoroughfares of this most locomotive country.

Organization, however, must always be very difficult, because it requires in the organizer an unusual combination of qualities. Ardour, forethought, and imagination are among the first qualities. And, as there is so much that is complicated, disastrous, and inopportune in human affairs, it is pre-eminently necessary that a man, to organize skilfully, should be very apprehensive. He who supposes

The qualities
of a good
Organizer.

that things will go well, or indeed that they will go at all, without careful preparation and constant urging, is unfitted for an organizer. At the same time there must be coexisting with the foregoing high qualities, an unwearied interest in details, and a power of massing them together, and of marshalling them as a general does his battalions. Then there must be a nice sense of proportion in a good organizer, for everything goes by number and by weight. Besides, he must possess that tact and knowledge of the world which show a man how business of all kinds proceeds, and which are utterly different from any knowledge that is to be got from books alone. For instance, no man, who has not sat in the assemblies of men, can know the light, odd, and uncertain ways in which decisions are often arrived at by those bodies. No man, who has not commanded, can appreciate how much even the most precise orders are likely to be disobeyed. No man, who has not had some practical dealings with mankind, is aware how much explanation is necessary to make people really comprehend anything, and how most persons will say that they understand what you tell them before they really do so.

It is not necessary, however, for a good organizer to be a man of very large experience. It is astonishing how soon a shrewd man will make himself master of the foregoing results of experience, and of many like them if he has any opportunity of seeing the world. To take a high example, Lord Bacon would not have needed to have attended many councils before he

could write upon them in the admirable way that he has done ; but some he must have seen before he could so write.

Everybody knows what great results may be obtained by good organization ; but it is well to see, by the examination of details, how amply men are repaid for even a little expense of thought and time given to the methods of organizing. It is a well-known saying, and a very true one, that a bar of iron or a piece of timber is no stronger than it is at its weakest point. There is the point where, in real work, it will break ; and this general law holds good in many cases, and may be applied very largely.

Great results
from small
attempts at
Organization.

For instance, any arrangement for the reception of crowds of people is likely to be deficient from a want of thought of where there will be a rush of numbers to a given point at a given time. Now in organizing with a view to this point of difficulty, it is surprising what a reward there would be for any small expense of forethought and method. It is perhaps not too much to say, stating the matter scientifically, that the mass divided by four equals the difficulty divided by sixteen.

Throughout this essay I shall not hesitate to take the most simple and commonplace examples occurring in ordinary life, and familiar to many people. Abstract propositions are soon forgotten ; but these illustrations remain in the mind, and may be fairly tested. There was, some little time ago, near London, one of the largest assemblages of persons that has ever been known. Experienced coachmen declared, that in their lives they

had never had such difficulties to overcome. After the entertainment was over, and when the assemblage was to disperse, many persons were kept three hours waiting for their carriages. There had not been the slightest attempt at organization. A person of an organizing mind who was present, remarked that three or four simple regulations would have obviated all the difficulty. I adduce this instance solely with a view to show how much reward there would have been for even a little attempt at organization. He said, if this bewildering mass of vehicles had been separated into four divisions,¹ and placards had been put up stating the nature of these divisions, the difficulty would have been reduced to small dimensions. By this division several persons would soon have found their conveyances and made their way off, at each minute rendering the difficulty much less for the timid and the inexperienced. In such a case, it is probably no exaggeration to say that the division of the mass into four would have gone far to reduce the difficulty into a sixteenth part of its proportions.

To return to more abstract propositions. The common defects of organization are, that it is too fixed ; that it leaves no room for growth ; that it is pedantic and unreasonably fond of rules ; and that it insists too much on qualifications. What is implied by that last word "qualifications" may be misunderstood without some

The reward
for Organiz-
ing in a par-
ticular case.

Pedantic
Organiza-
tion.

¹ Such, for instance, as, 1, open carriages with two horses ; 2, close carriages with two horses ; 3, carriages with one horse, not hired ; 4, carriages with one horse (such as cabs, etc.), hired.

explanation. It applies to a system adopted in all the departments of civil and military service, and also in many private undertakings. The moment that you fix a qualification, whether of age, of length of service, or of the possession of money, you do something which, at some time or other, will prevent your making choice of the best man. And, as far as I have been able to observe the effects of this qualification, its imposition has never produced such good results as to counterbalance the immense disadvantage of giving up freedom of choice amongst men. Take, for instance, the common case of a directorship in a railway company. If you say that a man, to be a director, must have a certain sum of money invested in the stock of that railway company, and which has been invested for some time (for that, I believe, is a common rule), you reduce your chance of obtaining good men to an almost indefinite extent. There is always some reason for these qualifications being adopted : but I would maintain that it is never a sufficient reason. Observe it in this particular case. The qualification of holding a certain amount of railway stock, is imposed with a view to secure the services of men who care greatly for the undertaking. We may see directly that this reason is not strong, for what is a large amount to one man is a small amount to another. Moreover, when a man can do anything well, and is entrusted to do it, he has generally an impulse to action which is as strong and as abiding as can be found amongst human motives, and which will even surpass the love of gain.

Disqualifica-
tion by age.

Turning now to the qualification of age, we may notice that even the lower animals differ much in their resistance to the natural effects of age. But human beings differ greatly more. Place a bar, as regards age, in the military civil, or legal service, and you will have done something to cut yourself off from the use of the greatest men.

The Austrian Monarchy would not have been restored if it had fixed its limit of age in military commanders to eighty years. Great luminaries of the law, Mansfields, Stowells, Eldons, Lyndhursts, Sugdens, Broughams, Campbells, have shone with undiminished light at times of life when the minds of ordinary men are becoming somewhat dim. And, from a foolish limit being placed in America to legal service, their greatest lawyer, Chancellor Kent, had to retire into comparative obscurity, at the early, and immature age for lawyers, of sixty years.

A similar statement might be made in reference to statesmen, diplomatists, and other civil servants; and it is very manifest, in the present day, that great age does not always imply much decadence of mental power. The real truth is, that the men who become eminent in anything, become so by native force. There is a great deal more vigour in them than in other men. And if you place a limit of age, you almost say, let us be ruled by average people.

Then, as regards placing a bar of disqualification on account of age at the other end of the career—at the entrance into service—we deprive ourselves, by so doing, of many of those men who, at a time of life when they

know something of their own minds and their own qualifications, would be willing to enter a service, and who would, I am firmly convinced, be the ablest men in it. Why should not a man at twenty-four years of age be able to commence the career of a soldier or a sailor? A common delusion which tends to create and justify these disqualifications is, that most occupations are supposed to be so difficult to learn, that there must be a long training for them ; which is in many cases a total mistake. Aptitude is a general qualification. Poets, they say, must be born poets : painters must be born painters. Inventors show the inventive faculty as children. Newton, as a child, constructed his windmill. But for all the ordinary affairs of civil and military life a certain general ability will enable a man to act and to succeed in many directions. Cardinal Richelieu had not gone through much military training ; but perhaps he was the fittest man in France to direct the siege of Rochelle.

One of the great difficulties as regards organization in practical life is, that the ground is hardly ever clear ; and that pedants, and men who are dominated by mere neatness and completeness of planning, will not recognise this fact.

Some metaphysicians have compared the mind of a child to a piece of blank paper upon which anything might be inscribed. But this is a very inadequate similitude. A better one, perhaps, would have been found in comparing the mind of a child to land yet uncultivated,

Rarely is
there clear
ground for
Organiza-
tion.

and of which the cultivation must vary according to the nature of the land. But, however this may be, there are very few things with which organization has to deal, which can be compared in blankness to a sheet of white paper ; and so organization is, for the most part, a patching, mending, correcting, or adapting. A new colony affords something which at first appears clear ground. But it is not so. There is the peculiar nature of the territory, of the adjacent neighbours, and of the colonists themselves, with all their old-world ways, habits, and prejudices. In short, in real life you rarely have to organize from the beginning, but, rather, to take up organization at a certain point of its progress. Hence the failure of constitution-mongers like the Abbé Sièyes, who are sublimely indifferent to the state of facts around them. To use a witty expression of Charles II., they will not see that " nothing more can be done in the matter than is possible." Another branch of this error, and a very important one, is, that plans are often organized to embrace the settled and the past, which can only have a chance of succeeding by being limited, in the first instance, to the unformed and the future. I will again take a very familiar example from daily life. Our great towns, London especially, are perhaps more wonderful and complicated underground than aboveground. An admirable suggestion has been made of late years by the *Times*, so to arrange all this underground apparatus that it should be easily got at—that there should not be this perpetual occasion for disturbing the pavements. All the influence of that power-

ful newspaper, has not succeeded in gaining for this plan the attention which it deserves. And it is one of those plans which will not have much chance of success until it is brought into operation in new ground, unbuilt upon. Thence the system may spread. But the difficulties it will have to meet in dealing with that which is already settled and built upon, are so strong that it is nearly certain to be stifled by them.

Another great cause of the failure of organization is, that the end proposed is not sufficiently stated at the outset. People have not asked themselves, at least in any detail, what they really want. Accordingly, some easy portion of the project is begun at once, and great part of what is then done proves a hindrance to a good plan being completely executed hereafter. It would not be a bad mode of preparing to organize anything, to state in writing what would be the perfection of the plan if it could be carried out : and then, by degrees, taking into consideration all the difficulties that occur, to fine down the project and bring it within the exact limits of what is practicable. But, at first, let there be a statement of what is wanted in the fullest acceptance of the words—what you would have if you were all-powerful in the matter. To lay down this kind of plan requires a great deal of forethought and imagination ; but it would be well bestowed. England is arming now to prevent foreign invasion ; yet few, perhaps even of governing people, have quite determined in their own minds what they want—what they would

The end not distinctly defined.

Defences.

like to have in the way of defences, if time and money were in abundance at their disposal; and have then seen how much of the essence of the best plan in theory can be obtained in practice by the means which they are likely to have at their command. As things go on in the world, great efforts will be made in a scattered, uncomprehensive, and unbusiness-like way; and probably one third of the force brought to bear upon this object will be lost.

To Organize
a policy.

At the present moment, what is wanted for England, in her dealings with foreign nations, is, to organize a policy, and then to prepare the moral and material forces necessary to sustain that policy. Doubtless this is a considerable difficulty for any country not despotically governed; since one of the drawbacks upon the representative form of government lies in the frequent changes which take place in the governing persons: changes, too, which often have their origin in very slight questions, and are not connected with any great change of policy, especially as regards foreign affairs. Still these changes in the governing persons may be very detrimental, if only in creating the idea abroad of a proneness to mutability in our foreign policy. If England ever undergoes any deplorable reverse, it will probably be for want of preparedness, from deficiency in organization generally, and from the want of an organized plan of policy steadily pursued and prepared for. A further danger is, that one kind of policy should be adopted in ordinary times, and then be suddenly changed at a crisis when there

are no preparations made to sustain and enforce the new policy, and when the old preparations are unserviceable. Indeed, a large part of the preparations of mankind, even in the most civilized countries, are like those which are made in Thibet for the Great Lama festival called the Feast of Flowers, held at the Lamaserai of Kounboun. There are colossal statues of men and women, exquisitely wrought models of birds, animals, and even buildings ; and, in fine, there are decorations of the most elaborate and artistic kind. But they are all made of butter ; and, though they have been laboured at for months, they serve only for one day's festival, and are then thrown down into a ravine near the Lamaserai, to be devoured by crows.

The German Confederation is a notable instance of imperfect organization : and at a period, when, if well organized, it might almost reassure Europe of tranquillity, it is chiefly useful as affording a world-wide example of an ineffectual adaptation of very powerful means to the ends for which they were intended.

This brings us naturally to the consideration of whether certain people and certain forms of government are particularly apt at organization. Much misapprehension, I believe, prevails upon this point. It is said, for example, that the French are very clever at organization, and that the English are not. Before this statement could be verified, many questions would have to be decided. It would perhaps be found that the French are best at those forms of organization which are of a particularly definite

The German
Confeder-
ation.

Comparison
of the
French and
English as
Organizers.

and precise kind, and which are very liable to failure from being too regulative and pedantic. I think it may be observed that Frenchmen cannot readily conceive a rapid change of plan, and are somewhat disconcerted by it; whereas, on the contrary, the Englishman, being less a slave to logic and to precision of all kinds, succeeds in some matters which especially require fluency of nature. The British are perhaps the most versatile people in the world. This will appear an extraordinary epithet to apply to them; but they have shown great versatility. The Americans, who have taken many qualities from the British, are remarkable for versatility (using the word in a good sense). Again, it is the Anglo-Saxon race who have everywhere been the best colonists, which surely shows a great facility in their nature for adapting themselves to varying circumstances.

Organizing
powers of
despotism.

Then if we consider the different powers of organization inherent in different forms of government, we must admit that despotism not only possesses peculiar powers of organizing, but that all it creates has a certain resemblance to itself, and has an appearance and even a reality of order and precision which are likely to be wanting in free governments. But then the question comes, are these organizations that proceed from despoticisms as generative and as adaptable to circumstances as the organizations under free governments are found to be, which certainly do not look so well on paper, and are often loosely and irregularly formed, but which can walk

alone, and do not always require the go-cart of Government? However, as it must be admitted, that for a given time and for matters which are entirely under their own regulation, the organizations effected by despotic governments are likely to be more brilliant and serviceable than those of free governments, it especially behoves free nations to study and contrive that their freedom should hinder as little as possible their efforts at organization in matters that deeply concern their safety.

Of the different branches of organization, no one is more important than the organization of labour. This phrase is not used in any social sense, but in the humbler one of the direction of labour. I will take a very simple instance from rural life. There shall be a number of labourers employed in getting up a hayrick. A man of an organizing mind will enter the field, and, after watching the work for a little time, will discern how much labour is lost, and what remedy should be adopted to prevent that loss. Some labourers are at times standing idle in the field, while others cannot overtake the work allotted to them. This organizer will so dispose the labourers, and so arrange the whole mode of transit, as to produce an increase of thirty per cent in the work done. It will be said this is a very simple thing, a mere matter of arrangement, which anybody might do. But the remark is a ludicrous one. There have been many persons in the field all day long, some of them more interested in the result, perhaps, than the man who has

a talent for organization, and who improves all the arrangements as soon as he sees them. It is of no use saying that the matter is easy, and that anybody would see what was going wrong. The labourers did not see it,—for aught we know they would never have seen it ; or, seeing it, would not have known what remedy to propose. All good organization tends to simplicity : and, when a wise method is proposed, people are ready to say how self-evident it is. But, without the few men who perceive these self-evident things, the business of the world would go on even worse than it does.

A Roman
Camp.

If we wished to look for a notable instance of good organization, we could not readily find a better one than the camp of a Roman legion. The form of the camp, the position of the general's quarters, the space between the tents and the ramparts, and the respective stations for the infantry, the cavalry, and the auxiliaries, were all settled points. Every soldier had a complete idea of what was to be done, and what was to be his part in doing it. The advantage of such a system is too manifest to require any comment. A Roman camp must have been formed, or broken up, with a celerity unknown in modern times ; and those precious half-hours on which the fate of armies may depend, must often have been gained by a determined pre-arrangement of the exact work to be accomplished in this one particular.

New towns
in the
Spanish
colonies.

Another instance of good organization was afforded by the uniformity of arrangement which prevailed in the laying out of any new town in the Spanish possessions in

America. There was always to be a large square. In that square was to be the governor's palace. The extent of ground allowed to each inhabitant for the building of his house was generally a settled quantity : and, altogether, the arrangements were such as enabled every individual to understand what was the idea to be fulfilled, and consequently the work to be done.

The merits of good organization, and the demerits of the contrary, are singularly manifested in those enterprises which we call joint-stock undertakings. The first point to be urged is, that this form of enterprise should rarely be adopted except when it is absolutely needful. In some cases, such as insurance, it is absolutely needful. If the government of a country will not undertake insurance, joint-stock companies must do so. In the management of those concerns a board of directors is chosen for two or three important reasons. First, to prevent jobbing. That is an ugly and unpleasant word, but there is none other that so well expresses what is meant. Secondly, to divide odium amongst many persons. It would be a very awkward thing, for instance, for an individual to decline to accept the life of another for insurance ; but a board of directors easily undertakes that unpleasant responsibility. Thirdly, to represent divers interests. Fourthly, to obtain the opinions of various persons, and so to gain collective wisdom. These benefits must be attained at some sacrifice of that force which is always to be found in the government of a single individual. In-

Joint-stock
enterprises.

Frauds.

deed, so serviceable are the promptness, the speed, the directness, and the comparative invariability belonging to individual action, that individuals often obtain a fatal sway in these joint-stock undertakings : or, if not a fatal sway a fatal power of malversation. And so, in great measure, the first object of these joint-stock undertakings may be frustrated. If we look into the remarkable frauds which have occurred in joint-stock companies, we shall find that they have been perpetrated with long impunity in consequence of neglect on the part of the governing body in some very simple matter ; that neglect being produced by the carelessness incident to divided responsibility. It is not exactly that excessive trust has been placed in an individual respecting those matters which he was especially fitted to transact. It is not that a skilful traffic-manager has been suffered to be too despotic in matters of traffic. It is not that the plans of an accomplished actuary, or of a wise general manager, have been listened to with overmuch credulity. But it is that some matter of routine has been blindly and amazingly neglected. This might, in some measure, be obviated by a judicious division of labour amongst the governing body. The Government commission which of all that we have known worked the best, was composed of a few individuals possessing very different qualifications, each of whom took under his especial care one branch of the administration, for which he felt that he was more responsible than any of the other commissioners. In any case of the least difficulty or peculiarity arising in any

Division of
labour
creates re-
sponsibility.

department of the business, the commissioner to whom the difficulty first came, as belonging to his particular work, submitted the matter to his colleagues. All the commissioners had a good general knowledge of the business of the office; but, without any formal division of the business, they had come to an understanding that particular branches were under the especial survey of certain members of their body, who had shown the greatest aptitude for managing those branches: and, accordingly, they threw into their work some of the energy and responsibility which they would have manifested in their private affairs, or in any matter where they were, practically, supreme. With reference to the division of labour, we know of an instance in a joint-stock body, where one of the governing persons, an old gentleman ("confidence is a plant of slow growth in aged bosoms," as Lord Chatham said), solely busied himself in asking for important vouchers. If stock was bought he was sure to demand and to inspect the vouchers for the purchase. He probably felt that he was not a very skilful person in deciding upon difficult questions; but he had a sort of watchdog carefulness; and of that he was resolved to make an unfailing use in behalf of the great interests partially committed to his care. It is almost a droll thing to observe that those officers upon whom the stability of a great concern may depend, namely, the auditors, are often made but little of, are paid very small amounts for their services, and are treated as if their functions were little more than unmeaning formalities.

Some general principles.

There are several general principles not hitherto mentioned, which must have a place in any fitting discussion about organization. For instance, there is this one—that all complicated machinery is likely to break down in times of hurry and pressure. Another is, that divided responsibility is sure to lead to confusion and disaster. A third is, that all systems tend to a certain kind of crystallization ; the system becomes, in the minds of those who adopt it, and are bred under it, the result instead of being the means of getting at the result. Hence men become the slaves of routine. Now routine is not organization, any more than paralysis is order. These and the like considerations are the morals and metaphysics of organization, which depend on the nature and habits of men's minds. There are others in which a mixture of material and model considerations enters. For example, the question of what work shall be done by contract is a question that ought to be settled at an early stage of the organization of various transactions undertaken both by individuals and nations. There are some kinds of work which I have no doubt may be prudently contracted for. There are others which you can no more contract for than you can contract for a fine poem or a good essay. Any one who is skilled in organization, would endeavour to make up his mind soon as to what could, and what could not, be done by contract.

The building of houses.

There is probably no branch of human work in which mal-organization, or non-organization, is more visible than

in building. Here, too, it will be found, that several primary considerations have never been settled. Ask an ordinary builder what thickness of what material is requisite to keep out noise ; and you will find it is a question which he has never considered. Yet, surely, it is one of the first necessity. Then, again, in building, it seems never to have been considered that families differ in number : and, accordingly, wilfully ignoring this consideration, great contractors take large plots of ground, and cover them with exactly similar houses, which are perhaps equally unsuitable to large and to small families. The buildings, however, look all alike outside, which is held to be a most attractive circumstance. They are turned out something like the toys for children. Yet, surely, even as far as gain is concerned, greater profit would inevitably follow greater convenience. Nowhere is routine more observable than in building. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, when she revisited England after being in the East, observed that everybody's reception-rooms seemed to be constructed after the fashion of a grand pianoforte ; and the pianoforte style has held its ground ever since, though very little can be said for its merits. Again, one would have imagined, that climate would be much considered by architects and builders ; whereas they often seem to think it a slight matter ; and houses are constructed after the same pattern, for wet and dry, for cloudless and beclouded districts. Occasionally amongst primitive people these manifest realities are thought of and allowed for ; but, when you come to

highly civilised communities (which ought, by the way, to furnish the best builders), buildings are turned out, for the most part, in a set pattern, and that a bad one.

Public
buildings.

There are not many undertakings which afford a better example of want of organisation than the public buildings of a certain great and free country. In them is to be seen what it is to work upon disjointed plans, under different sets of masters, and with no pervading purpose or design. But, as it has just been said, building is one of the most fertile subjects for exemplifying all the merits of organization and all the demerits of its opposite. Very rare, indeed, is it to meet with a well-constructed house even in a country like England, which is rich in all the means and appliances for building. It always seems as if an ordinary house had been constructed with a view to the future employment of workmen, in reparation, renewal, and reconstruction. Of course all that part of this labour which might have been avoided, is so much national loss. One of the great defects in house-building is, that houses are so constructed as to be a mystery even to their owners. Very important parts of the building, or rather of the adjuncts to the building, are buried in brickwork ; concealed under woodwork ; and made as complicated as possible ; so that, when a disaster occurs in a house, such as a sudden overflow of water, not one of the occupants knows where the disaster arises, or has more than a guess at what has happened. There is seldom any preparation for extremes of weather ; and when a frost breaks up, there is generally a damage of property in such a city as

London which it takes many thousands of pounds to repair. Much of this need for reparation occurs from an unwise parsimony at the outset ; and much also from a want of knowledge of the nature of the materials for house-building. Then, again, the various artisans employed in the construction of houses have no feeling for each other's work, and there is a want of unity of purpose in their workmanship. Moreover, the house is constructed to be sold or to be let, but not to be lived in.

Another instance of mal-organization is to be found in many municipal institutions. In this age, though there is much objection to centralization, municipal institutions have fallen into a certain disrepute, whereas they always afford great opportunities for usefulness and administrative skill. Many a man is ambitious of getting into Parliament and doing something useful there, who, having obtained his seat, finds himself powerless in that assembly. The same man, however, might have been a great light in a municipal council. And it is by such instances of misdirected energy that mal-organization often arises ; a large department of administrative business being thus left to the mismanagement of merely fussy and pretentious people.

To proceed to another branch of organization—that of intellectual labour—such as the construction of a public department. How little skill is often shown in its organization. It seems often to be forgotten what is the work to be done ; and should there come a change, or an increase,

of work, there is next to no power of adaptation to meet it. It was a very remarkable confession of Sir Robert Peel, on a certain occasion, that work which he would have liked to have had done, and which he apparently thought ought to have been done by Government, could not be effected by the force he had at his command in the public offices. And yet there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of intelligent men, who could have assisted the minister ; but there were no easy ways of getting at them. In such a conjuncture, a despotism would triumph, for it would insist upon having its men to do its work.

Parsimony a hindrance.

Parsimony is often a great hindrance to good organization. There is work to be done which requires fourteen persons to do it, and it may be absolutely mischievous to employ only nine. The thing is attempted to be done and is not done ; and the plan which is sought to be carried out obtains the ill reputation of being impracticable simply because adequate means have not been provided to bring it into practice. It has been demanded from a pony to do the work of a dray-horse.

Government.

The organization of government must ever be a most interesting and important form of organization ; and it is necessary that it should be peculiarly good and skilful among a free people where the difficulties to contend against are very great.

Legislation.

If we look at the organization for legislation in the foremost constitutional government that exists in the world, our own, the arrangements will be found to be

deplorably defective. When a bill is introduced into the House of Commons, no mortal can tell what will become of it; and sometimes its fate seems to have no reference whatever to its merits. It may be a curious instance of the association of ideas; but, in contemplating our mode of legislation, I am somewhat oddly reminded of a story told by some missionary a long time ago. He was amongst a black and savage people, and had prospered with them very well, until he began to teach them the doctrine of original sin. Somehow or other they construed his teaching of this doctrine into a personal affront. They assembled together; instituted a war festival: and, dancing round the unfortunate missionary, darted in upon him with fierce and threatening gestures, exclaiming, "Black man, is he a bad man; black man a bad man?" Whether the missionary escaped with life, or the story is told by some brother missionary, I do not remember; but perhaps he might have been saved if there were a feast to the moon, or to some sacred animal or bird, to be celebrated, which took off the attention of the savages. I suppose the reason why this story occurs to me in thinking of legislation, is that in both cases the meaning of the two principal persons, the missionary and the minister in Parliament, is equally misconceived and misrepresented, and the result entirely left to terror or to chance.

But, seriously speaking, it cannot be too earnestly impressed upon a free nation, that something like method of procedure and skill in organization should exist in its

modes of legislation, if it wishes to conciliate respect for constitutional government, and to ensure good working for that government. A longing eye would never be turned, even for a moment, by any sensible person, to despotism, if free governments possessed only moderate skill in legislation, and if great reforms were not hindered by that exhibition of freedom which takes the form of noise, nonsense, and expense, and allows too much force to mere obstructiveness. It is a great grievance to the subject of any state, when private legislation, in matters that might be very beneficial to him, is made so tedious and expensive, as to discourage enterprise, and hinder some of the best uses of property.

Statesmen
sadly pressed
for time.

But it is perhaps at the centre of affairs that skilful reorganization is chiefly required. As it is, we are governed by men whose time and attention are so much occupied by all manner of details and claims upon them of all kinds, that they must look upon everybody who approaches them as a bore to be got rid of. If the wisest man in the world wished to submit to a British minister the best suggestion of a fruitful brain, and if he succeeded in working his way to an interview with the minister, the probability is that the great functionary's pervading thought would be, "How soon shall I get rid of this man? how much of my time will he occupy?" When men perceive this, their communications inevitably become poor and inadequate. They feel that they will not have the requisite attention from this overburdened and pre-occupied person, whom they have made such efforts to

see : their explanations become confused : and their most judicious remarks occur to them as they are going down the staircase, having left the minister's room. But this is not all. If it were only suggesters, improvers, and inventors that could not get a sufficient hearing, though great loss might occur to the public service on many critical occasions, the business of government might, substantially, be well conducted. But the fact is (and I appeal to persons of experience whether it is not a fact) that subordinates can hardly expect to obtain the requisite attention, even when the minister is most willing and most industrious. Now this want of time on the part of high official personages is a very important subject for consideration; and will become more so as civilization advances. Then, again, as education advances in a country, as there are more people who can read and write, there will be more correspondence by letters. And when, as in the case of Great Britain, this increase of education coincides with great increase of population, and with a great increase of industry, and of the outlets for industry, the claims upon a minister's time must also be largely increased. As an instance of what I mean, it is no further back than the last four or five years that a new colony of the highest promise has arisen. I allude to British Columbia. There is not a department of government to which this colony will not bring additional business.

Constant increase of the claims on a minister's time.

Now where is the remedy to be found for this increasing difficulty? It is only to be found in a better organiza-

The Cabinet Council. tion of the Cabinet Council itself, and of the several departments over which individual ministers preside.

Legislative assemblies. Again, to meet this increase of business, much consideration is needed in legislative assemblages. They must make up their minds what they should do, and what they should not do. The more power they have, the more care they should take to avoid injudicious interference with the Executive, unless indeed they are prepared to sit all the year round, and to manage all the business of the country themselves, considering the ministers as merely the head clerks of departments.

How to increase the efficiency of departments. For the improvement of these departments three things are necessary. First, that there should be more intellectual strength in them. Secondly, that the persons having this strength should not be too much confined to official life, but should have much communication with the outer world. Thirdly, that these same persons should have some access to the legislative assembly. When Pitt had to fight a bill, in Parliament, he first shut himself up with the bill and with those who could give him information about it, until he had mastered every detail. And thus should every bill be dealt with. The man who introduces it should know it, and all its bearings, as a successful aspirant for honours at a university knows any of the books he takes up for examination. As it is, the legislation emanating from any department is often too extensive for the minister at the head of the department to master all of it thoroughly ; and the person who could introduce

any particular bill, doing it full justice, has no means of getting a hearing. He listens patiently or impatiently, while his measure is foolishly attacked, or feebly defended, in Parliament. This of course, chiefly takes place with respect to what are called minor measures; but which may nevertheless have great influence for good or ill upon the public.

The three objects above named might be easily attained if people were once aware of the importance of them. But as nothing more easily escapes attention than indifferent workmanship in intellectual matters, it is probable that a remedy will never be provided, at least not until some great disaster shall have happened, or until some man of genius, who has attained political power, turns his attention to the improvement of the public departments, and makes that one of the chief objects of his life.

There is another great branch of human endeavour, indeed the greatest, in which organization is especially necessary; and that is, the administration of charity. Works of charity. The French are said to be especially skilful in this matter. I shall merely illustrate this part of the subject by an example, happily of rare occurrence, in which organization is everything; and that is the relief of famine. The number of things to be skilfully provided for in such a case is great, and the questions to be settled very embarrassing. What kind of food is best; what kind of food is especially portable; what kind of food will combine best with what little of other food is left in the starving A famine.

district : what mode of transport is best fitted to convey supplies to the district ; what mode of circulation within this district is most feasible ; where the main dépôt should be placed ; where the subsidiary dépôts should be situated ; what strength is still left in the people for journeys to the place where food is to be obtained ; how the strong should be prevented from crushing the weak ; and how all should be encouraged and set to work ;—are no light difficulties. There has been one man in our generation who has been great on this subject : and it will be in the recollection of many official men how well that man performed his work. One hundred thousand pounds entrusted to him would go as far as double the sum dealt with in a slatternly and unsystematic manner. A similar kind of skill is required for all great works of charity.

Organiza-
tion for
teaching.

If we pursue the question of organization into several departments where so fine a word is seldom used for the thing to be done, but where the benefits of good organization would be very manifest, we shall find that it is often greatly neglected. Take for example the organization for teaching. How sadly deficient are dictionaries, grammars, recipe-books, indexes, notes, and commentaries. In looking around him at the great accumulations of knowledge, which he supposes to be stored up in books, the unpractised student thinks he will be able to find out everything he can want to know. At a later period it is with a heavy heart that he sets to work to make any research in any subject. It is not that there have not been many people who have known a great deal of the

subjects they have undertaken to write about : but they have not conveyed their knowledge with method or precision : often they have not seemed to know what it is that other people would stumble over ; and, worst of all, they have almost invariably presumed that the persons, for whose benefit they were writing, did not require much instruction, but were already very well informed ; whereas, there is no depth or density of ignorance which might not more reasonably have been taken for granted. Unfortunately, however, as soon as anybody knows anything well himself, he seems to be so far removed from other people's ignorance as to be unable to make any due allowance for it. I shall turn again to a familiar instance. An animal is suddenly taken ill. The person who in such cases should be called in is not to be found. Indeed there are very few of such persons. Recourse is had to books. Books on the subject are abundant. You are very fortunate in such a case if the symptoms are so clearly defined in the book you consult as to enable you to recognise the disease. Then comes the remedy, which perhaps runs in this sort of phraseology : "Dissolve a little something in something else." This is not precise enough for your purpose : and you turn to another work, where, alas ! you find only a variation of the former words : "Dissolve a bit of something in a little of something else." Not a word is given in either prescription of the quantities to be used. You are then told to trim a feather neatly, and with it to apply the medicament. What a mass of vagueness it all is ! "A

feather!" What feather? "Trimming neatly!" What is meant by trimming neatly? Altogether it seems as if you were almost mocked by the incompleteness of these directions, which, to be of swift utility, should have been given with the utmost preciseness.¹

What has been said above about a particular class of books of instruction, applies equally to other classes. The result is that you can seldom find exactly what you want to know. To write a well-organized grammar would really be a work of high art, and would require some of the qualities of a good general. It is not to be wondered at that Julius Cæsar should have written a grammar: for the functions of a good writer on grammar and a great general are not so far apart as we might imagine. In both cases you have to penetrate into a hostile country, and every movement onwards should have exactly the right force to maintain the movement.

If we look at the cause of failure in works of instruction, and in the methods of instruction, it arises from a fault which has been before noticed as common to other forms of mal-organization: namely, a forgetfulness of the main purpose for which the organism is intended. To that main purpose there must be constant recurrence in the mind of the organizer. In teaching, he has not to display knowledge, but to impart it: and this purpose he has to maintain, at all hazard of being lengthy, or tedious, or reiterative; just as the builder has to remember that

Forgetfulness of the main purpose.

¹ I need hardly say that I am taking an instance from real life. The disorder was one affecting the trachea.

the house he is building is to be lived in, a circumstance which, as I have before observed, is not always fully present to his mind.

Turning now to an instance of organization of a very different kind, we may notice how much skill is required in organizing for domestic service and comfort. It is universally admitted that servants are the great difficulty of modern domestic life ; but very few aids and appliances, comparatively speaking, have been introduced to lessen domestic labour. Some persons who have considered this subject say that we are very unskilful as regards the movement of burdens of all kinds in our domestic economy. I am afraid that a better construction of houses would be necessary to effect the great improvements which these persons contemplate. But the subject is well worth consideration ; and certainly, at present, it often seems as if there were very little work obtained from the force put in motion, and as if there must be somehow or other a great loss of labour.

Organization
for domestic
service.

Of all the services which a man of an organizing mind can render to his country, one of the first is that bestowal of patient thought and elaborate foresight which shall have for its result the organization of a policy upon some difficult and complicated subject. Take, for instance, our Colonies and military outposts. Whether there are any of the latter which should not be retained ; what expenses we ought to defray, and what expenses we ought not to defray, in reference to our Colonies ; what

defences we should prepare for them, and what defences we should urge upon them to prepare for themselves, in case of war : these are all great questions, and questions that we cannot escape from. Millions of money might be saved by the man who should investigate the relations between a Mother-country and its colonies, and who should apply his conclusions to the exact state of things with which Great Britain has at present to deal. As it is, the policy of most countries as regards these great subjects is purely accidental : it is at the mercy of obscure revolts in distant provinces : it depends upon the accident of a demagogue rising here or there, or on the casual blunders of official personages. Meanwhile the inhabitants of the Mother-country are often taxed for some colonial object, which if well understood, would be instantly abandoned ; and whole populations of laborious people are victimised for the sake of some idea which cannot be realized, and for some dubious and hesitating policy which will be shivered to atoms when there comes upon the Mother-country the real pressure of disastrous events.

What we have said, hitherto, of the uses of organization, has reference to matters, comparatively speaking, private and provincial. But there is a use to which skilful organization might be directed that far transcends all these. It is such a political organization of the governing men, and of the better men throughout the various states of the world, as should enable them to have a potent voice in the conduct of the world's affairs. At this mo-

ment, there is scarcely a discreet person in England who is not deeply anxious for the maintenance of peace—not of an armed peace, but of an inexpensive and real peace. Surely there are thousands of men in France, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Spain, who fondly desire the same great good. But a few commanders of legions, abetted by those persons in every state who are restless, intriguing, and vain-glorious, desire the contrary. And these latter prevail. If they cannot have war, at least they prevent most of the benefits of peace. Is there no way by organization of counteracting their designs? The hackneyed expression of Burke—"when bad men conspire, good men should combine"—is not hackneyed in action. Doubtless this organization so much to be desired, though not an aim wholly beyond the endeavours of private individuals, lies chiefly within the province of skilful and foreseeing statesmen. There is such a desire for peace as we have described prevalent throughout Europe; and the leaders of mankind, as statesmen aim to be, might surely bring this desire into forcible action. When a Congress was last held in Europe, it was felt by many men that the objects of the Congress were but small, and that what Europe really needed, was a Congress that should dare to speak boldly to ambitious monarchs respecting the vital subject of disarmament.

One of the main difficulties in the way of such an organization is the frequent change of Ministers which must take place in Constitutional Governments,—those, too, being the Governments in which the desire of peace

is most likely to prevail. But any Cabinet that should commence the heroic effort of an organization for peace, would lay down lines on which the noble vessel would hereafter be built. And, whether the attempt should prove fruitless or not, it ought to be made by statesmen, if statesmanship is to hold the high place in the world which it has hitherto maintained. Freedom has not been gained by any nation without great and continuous efforts, which have been attended by anything but continuous and unvarying success. Peace also is not to be gained but by great and skilful labour, and through much adversity of every kind. It is one of those triumphs which are not won without being planned for. Vague wishes will not produce it. We should not content ourselves with merely waiting for it, as sanguine men in desperate circumstances wait for some signal piece of good luck that should inevitably retrieve their affairs. It will more assuredly come by being worked for ; and it is not a good beyond the power of skilful organization, long and patiently directed, to attain.

I shall venture to add that there is a use of organization to which it has seldom been applied, and indeed where its application will at first be held to be ludicrous : and that is, the organization of pleasure. Inexperienced people imagine that festivity is an easy, haphazard sort of thing, that merely requires certain means and appliances, and that all will then go straight and right. But anybody who has tried to entertain 300 persons will speak very

differently. Indeed, throughout nature we may see that it is not the material, but the use of it, that gives the great result. Perhaps the air we breathe affords the most striking illustration of that fact which is anywhere to be found. In the atmosphere the elements are mechanically mixed, and they give life and health. Combine the same elements chemically, and they furnish the most deadly poison. All life would stop on this globe, if the nitrogen and oxygen in the air were chemically combined. Indeed throughout chemistry a similar law is visible. It is two of this, and three of that, and five of the other, that make some useful compound. Change one of these numbers ever so little, and you have quite a different result: perhaps a noxious one. These seem rather grand illustrations to apply to the organization of pleasure and festivity; but they are faithful illustrations and of universal application. For want of attending to a judicious combination of means on most occasions of festivity, from an assembly at the grandest duke's down to a picnic in the country amongst country people, you may generally prophesy failure. The primary fact of number is seldom attended to, though you would imagine that this was one of the first things to be thought of. What is suitable for 200 is totally unsuitable for 270; and yet that additional 70 is often thrown in with the greatest carelessness. Hence it is that from crowding of people, from the want of judicious ingress and egress, from an unskilful position of furniture, from an inapt choice of guests, from a want of judicious introduction, most festivities are failures. Dances are

Organization
of pleasure.

given at which nobody can dance : assemblages of brilliant and conversable personages are collected together ; but they cannot move about pleasantly, and often their great souls are devoted to the serious questions of how they shall get out of that corner in which they are imprisoned, and how they shall eventually make their escape from the party. Yet a little forethought and organization would have set all these things to rights.

Our public amusements partake the same faults. There seems to be no knowledge that each living being requires a certain portion of air to recreate itself with, and that there is nothing but detriment for it without that necessary portion of air. An all-wise Providence has fixed that rule : and it is no good attempting to ignore it. There might be a theatre that should help to renovate the drama, and should be the delight of the world ; but if it is to do so in modern times, it must be so organized as regards its lighting, airing, warming, and especially as regards its facility of ingress and egress, as to combine all the necessary elements of reasonable comfort.

Theatres.

The same law applies to the pleasures of the poor. Drunkenness is the great evil of the world. You will never remove it until you have organized better pleasures for the poor, especially those pleasures which should make drunkenness a slower affair. The fact that drunkenness is mostly managed in gin-palaces without sitting down, is alone a most disastrous circumstance. You see this when contrasting the habits of our own and of foreign nations. Put a man in a room where he can play

dominoes, read newspapers, and have what he considers good talk ; and you will observe that he will not drink as fast or as deep, or as strongly as he otherwise would. In short there would be other things to amuse him besides drinking : and what does he drink for, but to amuse himself, and to forget troubles of every kind ?

It may be observed, generally, as regards organization, that very few people appreciate the force of numbers.¹ The force of numbers unappreciated. For instance, as I have before said, it would astonish a person who has not tried it, to find how long it will take to divide and apportion victuals amongst 300 persons. And the same ignorance is visible in all dealings with crowds. Hardly anybody sufficiently considers what will give way under the pressure of a crowd, or how easy it is by skilful subdivision to diminish the threatened danger. What a road will bear ; what a bridge will carry ; how much labour animals can endure ; and, in fact, at what rate large bodies of men and sustenance can be efficiently moved ;—are questions that may concern, at some critical moment, the supremacy of an empire. And the nation that has the best organizers to the front will be the nation that will win the day. The first Napoleon Napoleon's skill in Organization. was, in general, very skilful, prompt, and foreseeing in organization : but in his latter days a defect pervaded

¹ More than this : few of us have any power of accurately estimating number. On a clear night there are, it is said, but two thousand stars visible to an observer of ordinary powers of vision. Most persons, we have little doubt, imagine that they have seen thousands upon thousands.

his mode of organizing, which was fatal to him. He fell into routine and paper-work. I believe it was noticed in his Leipsic campaign that there were wonderful plans drawn up by him on paper, and circulated as orders of the day: but parts of them could not be executed: they were not applicable to the state of facts; and he was too imperious to listen to such remarks from his subordinates as, "Please your Majesty, nothing more can be done in this than is possible."

Organization
should not be
inanimate.

In short, all organization must be followed up. It should not be an inanimate, but a living, growing thing, prepared to meet the endless chances and changes which take place in this mutable world. Hence, in a consummate organizer, you require a versatility which can abandon to resume; which expands in order afterwards to contract; which has such a sense of the main result to be obtained, that it can sacrifice at once immense preparations no longer applicable to the shifting circumstances. This, of course, is the triumph of genius. The looker-on may call it haphazard work: but it is really the highest form of organization.

Unfailing
success in
business not
hitherto at-
tained by
Western
nations.

In a certain town in China, at the Hotel of the Three Perfections, the passers-by are informed that all sorts of business are negotiated with Unfailing Success.¹ What

¹ "By dint of looking on all sides, we at last espied a sign, on which was written in large Chinese characters, 'Hotel of the Three Perfections, lodging for travellers, on Horse or Camel; all sorts of business negotiated with Unfailing Success.'"—Huc's *Tartary, Thibet, and China*, chapter 5.

skill in the conduct of business may have been attained by that aged, punctilious, and literate people, the Chinese, who, according to their own account, have lived so many more thousand years upon the earth than other nations, we, a juvenile product of recent civilization, cannot presume to determine. But, in these western parts of the world, we certainly have not yet attained the art of negotiating all sorts of business with unfailing success. On the contrary, our affairs are full of failure ; and, in laying down plans for organization there is hardly ever allowance enough made for these failures, especially as regards the human agents, who are to be employed. Failures to be allowed for. It is almost amusing to hear the way in which men scheme out a public office, or propose arrangements for military or naval service. If it is a public office, they divide it, perhaps into departments, at the head of each one of which, they say, there is to be a clever man. Perhaps, too, it is provided that he is to be chosen out of the ranks of men already in the office. But, unfortunately, aptitude in a lower department does not necessarily infer aptitude in a higher ; and even a power of choosing men, which is unfettered, and which is really exercised with the best intentions, will not always ensure a good choice, simply because you cannot find out whether men can work well in a particular way until they have been tried in it. As a notable instance of this, it may be observed that some men's faculties are benumbed by responsibility ; while on the contrary, the faculties of others are quickened by it ; and the man whom you thought frivolous, light, indolent,

or indifferent, is, all of a sudden, changed by responsibility into a being of another character.

Autocratic
power.

Many other reasons might be adduced ;¹ but whatever the reasons may be, the fact is certain, that, choose as you will, you must make a large allowance for failures. Hence in any organization of men to do any work, you must provide something like autocratic power resident in some one person, who must find the men to do the work, especially when the need for good men is urgent. When the elder Pitt chose Wolfe to take the command in Canada, it was not that any system of military organization had brought Wolfe into that position naturally ; but the minister heard of the man ; sent for him ; looked at him ; asked him whether he could do the work that was to be done ; and, judging from his answer, and from the whole bearing of the man, that he was the right kind of person, resolved, on his own responsibility, to appoint him. No system can supply the place of personal knowledge and judgment ; but a system may be organized as always to allow room for the exercise of this knowledge and judgment.

Trial of Or-
ganization.

In forming any organization, it is most desirable to get in some way or other a trial of it ; so that it shall meet with all the strain that it will have to encounter in real

¹ For instance, before you have had some experience of the way in which a man handles business, how can you know whether he will divide to methodize, or divide to subtilize ? Bacon says : " He that doth not divide, will never enter well into business ; and he that divideth too much will never come out of it clearly."

life, and yet, if it should break down, the failure should not be absolutely disastrous. It is said that one of the great firms, whose business it is to build locomotive engines, never allows an engine to go out of the yard, until it has travelled a thousand miles in that yard. This is as it should be; and a like precaution might be adopted in many other matters. The necessity for these trials and rehearsals arises, of course, out of the weakness of our nature. Even the largest and most foreseeing minds are apt to overlook or forget some small thing which yet is requisite for success. And thus harmonious working can only be ensured by previous trial. How much this is requisite is nowhere better seen than in the getting-up of an amateur play. All the performers shall know their parts thoroughly well, and be very clever men and women; but the rehearsal discloses to them many small points of dialogue, and dexterous little arrangements of "properties," which have to be arbitrarily settled and provided for beforehand, if the performance is to go off well and smoothly. It is likely that considerable discouragement will be felt after the first rehearsal has taken place; but that discouragement, leading to adaptation of all kinds, is often the parent of a sure success. Everybody will admit the truth of the foregoing remarks, and even think them somewhat commonplace. But yet what many of us do not see, is, that we could institute more trials, experiments, and rehearsals than we do adopt: and we should institute them if we were once deeply convinced of the exceeding and peculiar benefit of all such

A rehearsal.

More trials
might be
instituted.

trials. In building, for example, hardly any labour is thrown away which is given to very accurate models made in the first instance—models not only of the proposed building, but of the buildings which surround it. The same remark applies to works of art, especially to those of a public character, in which, if models were made, not only of the work of art proposed, but of all that would come near it and be in the same purview, much absurdity and irrelevance would be prevented. Again in the disposition and arrangement of troops for offence, or defence, frequent trials of their capability for movement are essential to the efficiency of the force; and I suppose a general would rather have under his command fifty thousand men, of whose powers of movement and concentration he had had some experience, than a hundred thousand of equal worth in other respects, but of whose powers of movement he knew nothing. It is only by these experiments that we learn to make due allowance for adverse and peculiar circumstances. The effects of fair weather, rainy weather, or snowy weather, on the movements of troops or of the materials for war, will only be thoroughly ascertained by practical experiment. The Duke of Wellington, after observing, with the late Lord Londonderry, a review of an immense number of Russian troops, made some such observation as the following: “You see, Charles, this is all very fine; but I think our little army could move round about them in every direction in a way that would astonish them.” The Duke knew from experience what he could do with his little army.

It is for reasons similar to the above that it is so valuable to gain the advantage of a new eye to look upon any matter of organization. Honest criticism is always very valuable to a man of settled purposes who can bear a great deal of criticism without being overpowered by it. And nowhere is criticism likely to be more available Criticism. than when it is addressed to systems of organization. I have no doubt that there is not a system of organization existing in this country, however well devised, which, if submitted in all its details to a shrewd man of organizing nature, might not in some point or other be considerably improved by his suggestions. The people who are engaged in working out anything, soon come to love the mode of working, and to believe in it a little more than they should do. The cold unprejudiced eye of a bystander called in for consultation, will see things to which the wisest men engaged in the working of the organization have become somewhat blind. An indolent boy, prob- The workers in a system dull about improving it. ably devoted to marbles, was set to work, in a complicated system of machinery, to conduct some small operation, which he found could be managed just as well by connecting two parts of the machinery with a string, while he was thus left free to play with his marbles. That circumstance led to an improvement in a certain branch of machinery. It is true that in this instance, the improvement was found out in practice ; but discoveries of a similar kind are often more likely to be made by a shrewd stranger than by those who are so accustomed to the practical management of the machine, that they have

lost, in some measure, the power of criticising, and have ceased to look out for improvements.

Readiness of
resource.

Readiness of resource must always be a great element in the good working of any organization. It may not be wanted in the mind of the person who plans the organization. He has, or ought to have, plenty of time to form his plans, and abundance of opportunity for consultation with others; but in execution ready and fertile minds are requisite. It must be owned that it is difficult to discover this readiness by any formal examination, but a little converse with a man may soon lead to the discovery of whether he is a ready man or not. As I said before, I have advisedly taken all manner of commonplace instances to illustrate this essay; and I

An example
of readiness
of resource.

now choose a humorous and trivial one. In a remote country place there was a building suddenly to be prepared and used for a festal occasion. The work was done in a hurry, and there was no opportunity for any rehearsal of the festivity. The carpenters did not leave off working until the time when, with sharp ears, the sound of approaching wheels might be heard. The building was lighted up; but owing to the roof being lined with a dark canvas, and to other circumstances, the lighting was totally inadequate. The managers looked at one another in dismay; not that all the dismay on their countenances could be seen, on account of the general dimness that prevailed. "What is to be done?" they exclaimed. A young man standing by said, "Seize

upon the carriage-lamps : they will furnish an abundant supply of light." Others were quick enough to discern the modes by which these lamps might be attached to the building. A remedy was thus provided, and that which would have been an egregious failure was turned into a complete success. Now this is one of those cases in which people exclaim, How obvious a remedy ! how sure we are that we should have thought of that. But probably no one would have thought of it—at any rate, no one but a man of ready resource. The young man's reply to that difficult question is equal in value to nine good answers on the Peloponnesian War, an ample account of the digamma, eleven solutions of sums in decimal fractions, not to mention three accurate lists of kings, given in reply to questions set by examiners for the Civil Service. I am not ridiculing these functionaries. They have no opportunity of testing men in this way ; but these little things are famous tests, and are among the best proofs of the highest qualities. And they are only to be got at by personal knowledge. The result is that the most serviceable men are not to be found out by any mechanical system, be the mechanism ever so good.

Let no man say, because an organism continues to exist, and has continued for a long time, that its organization is therefore good. It is astonishing what a long time a thing will last which has yet lost its chief meaning and savour. All people have a conservative element

Tenacity of
life in certain
Organisms.

in them ; and, besides, the want of time prevents men from looking closely into an existing institution, and considering whether it serves the purpose they mean it to serve. And so the organism goes on like an old tree that has long ceased to make any accretions of vitality, that is dying at the root, and dying at the branches, and putting forth fewer leaves and smaller fruit every year. But still, to the unobservant eye, it seems very strong ; and it is not until the day of its fall that men find out how decayed it was, and wonder that it could have stood upright so long. This tenacity in certain organisms, and the unwillingness of men to interfere with them, even when they suspect them to be of little use, or, perhaps, a hindrance rather than a service, must be taken largely into account by those who would propose any new organization to take the place of what has been a long time before the eyes of the world.

The passport
system.

The passport system affords an example of organization which is deserving of notice, especially as regards what has been said above respecting the tenacity of certain organisms. It has often happened that a man has seen something flourishing in his own times, which he is well aware will in future cease to exist, and of which he would like to leave an accurate account on record for the benefit of future ages. If any person were, with that view, to seek to describe the passport system, he would be greatly puzzled. It is not that he could not give a fair account of the physical and material aspect of the system ; but he would feel that posterity would ask, at

the outset, and before entering into any details, what were the main drift and meaning of the system. And he would be unable to give any satisfactory reply to this question. Does it serve to protect the head of the State from the danger of assassination? Does it in any way prevent insubordination, or check conspiracy? He will be obliged to answer in the negative. The most dangerous man in Europe would find no difficulty in going where he listed. What reason, therefore, can be given for such a system being maintained? It is grievous, onerous, and expensive. It vexes innocent people, discourages commerce, and creates general dissatisfaction. It cannot justly be replied that it gives employment to many persons; and that despotic monarchs fear to do away with the system for fear of its distressing private individuals. Nothing would be easier than to give ample compensation to the persons at present employed; and no grievance to the subject could be made out of the abolition of such a system. This peculiar case of organization has been cited for two reasons. First, it affords a notable instance of an utter want of thought as to the object to be attained. If the object is to protect states and monarchs from the intrusion of dangerous men into their dominions, the passport system ought to be made a thousand times more strict. It should be dealt with like persecution in matters of faith, which will succeed, as the history of the world shows, if sufficiently severe and continuous; but a persecution which pinches, but does not suppress, is merely an irritant, and not an

The passport
system.

absorbent. Secondly, this passport system affords an instance of an organism of which the spirit has long ago died out, but which stands upright, and may seem to have some strength and meaning in it, merely because it cumpers the earth and is a decided hindrance.

Various kinds of organization have been considered in this essay. Many hindrances to good organization have been pointed out, and some few furtherances have been shown ; but, after all, what must be mainly relied upon is to get the organizing man.

Qualities of
a good
Organizer."

It may be asked what are the nearest gifts to this power of organization that is so much wanted in the world ? How can we divine whether a man will be a good organizer, or whether he will not ? This is a question that can hardly be answered except by some observation of the particular man. Apprehensiveness has been declared to be necessary. This quality may soon be discerned in any person. Moreover, what method there is in any man's mode of working may readily be observed if only a little of the man's work is submitted for inspection. There are other qualifications, however, which are more difficult to be discerned. Two essential qualities in a good organizer are a thorough and constant perception of the end in view, and a power of dealing with masses of details, never forgetting that they are details, and not becoming their slave. It requires much converse with a man before you can ascertain his qualifications in either of the foregoing respects, especially the former. It must

take some time to ascertain of any man that he is clear and constant in his main purpose, and is not to be led away from it by the dexterous fulfilment (devised by himself or others) of smaller ends and aims. Then, again, a man may be judiciously apprehensive, methodical, clear and constant in his purpose, and great in the mastery of details, so far as the research into them and the putting them in some kind of order is concerned. But he may not be skilful in putting them afterwards in their right places. There is a want of proportion in his work. He knows what work is to be done, and what kind of machinery must be invented to do it. He has skilfully collected and methodized his materials. But he cannot fit them well together in the order in which they are to work. And this peculiar kind of skill can hardly be predicated of any man until you have seen him in action.

Deficiency of certain men in the last touch of Organizing skill.

Such are the difficulties which must beset the search after skilful organizers; which cannot be an easy task, whether it be undertaken by a monarch in search of a minister, or a minister in search of a general or of a head of a civil department; or whether in lower spheres, it is the search on the part of a number of individuals banded together in some social or commercial enterprise for a man to organize victory for them. This phase of organizing victory was applied, I believe, to Carnot; and it does not give organization more than its due.

It may easily be inferred, if what has been above stated has any truth in it, that all examinations that should merely deal with acquisition, would probably fail in en-

Examinations may not bring out the Organizer.

abling us to discern the man of an organizing mind. The knowledge that was to be acquired lay before the man. His powers of taking it up are one thing : his powers of working it are another. He has dealt with the past ; you will want him to deal with the future.

I suspect it is often imagined that eloquent men are deficient in powers of organization. But there is no truth in this ; for, as far as the eloquent man shows method and foresight in his speaking, he shows qualities which fit him for organization. The same holds good of great writers as well as of great speakers.

It is an immense error to suppose that men who have shown themselves excellent in imagination, are, on that account, deficient in practical powers. It is said that Lord Byron would have made a skilful politician. There is no doubt that Goethe and Sir Walter Scott ¹ were first-rate men of business. It happened to the writer of this essay to be once concerned with others in a very difficult transaction, in reference to which communications were addressed to them by all manner of people. The two communications which, for clearness of view and mastery of details, were thought to be pre-eminent, came from two remarkable men of letters. The writer was afterwards not surprised to hear that one is a consummate manager of private theatricals, and that the parish of the

Imaginative
and learned
men not
deficient in
powers of
Organization.

¹ Any errors of Sir Walter in his own affairs do not conclusively militate against this statement. Generous men are particularly apt to neglect their own affairs, and to commit errors in them which they would not commit in the affairs of others entrusted to them. Observe the life of Lord Bacon in proof of this.

other is a model parish. There is a certain learned Dean of the present day¹ who is perhaps the best chairman of a committee that can be met with : and, in fact, literature, science, and art would be found in all ages to supply men peculiarly capable for the practical management of the ordinary affairs of life, and who would be likely to excel in organization, as they have already done something which requires organizing skill.²

Finally, in any work that a man has done, some of his aptitude for organization may be observed. A quibbling, crotchety person lacks, of course, the nature fitted to organize. A sanguine person lacks the nature to commence organization, although he may be able to maintain it when it is placed in his hands. Pliancy and firmness are both needed. A judicious abidance by rules, and holding to the results of experience, are good ; but not less so, are a judicious setting aside of rules, and a declining to be bound by incomplete experience. War furnishes the best illustrations of what is wanted in this respect. Drill is a good thing ; but drill is not to master us. To keep within reach of our supplies is a needful

¹ 1862.

² Anybody who has watched Mr. Carlyle's skill in attaining any information he cares to obtain must see that he could have been an excellent man of business. His drafts and his despatches might have been expressed in language not strictly in accordance with that of routine, but they would have been full of insight and foresight, and practicality of all kinds. Again no one has ventured to say that Mr. John Stuart Mill's learning, imagination, and logical powers have at all dimmed his reputation as an accomplished administrator.

thing ; but splendid movements have been executed in contravention to this rule. To have a base for our operations is no doubt a good military rule ; but, occasionally, baseless operations have effected great results in war. And other instances might be multiplied without end.

In conclusion, we cannot do better than turn again to Nature. In her organization there are the "vital force" which makes the plant grow, and the substances, organic and inorganic, which supply its sustenance. These latter correspond to our preparations of material, our rules, regulations, and ordinances, without a supply of which the organizing faculty will die, but which often smother it, or at least obstruct its growth. On the other hand, without these rules, forms, regulations, and preparations, the organizing faculty ends in mere ideas, and shrewd prophetic insight, leading, however, to no good result.

CONVERSATION IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

THE foregoing essay had been written some time ago. It had been printed, and privately circulated; and, to tell the truth, I had almost forgotten its existence, when I was fully reminded of it by the following circumstance.

We authors fancy we seldom hear the truth about ourselves, or our productions. Criticism, we think, is, for the most part, rather careless, and needs not be much attended to. When it is elaborate, if it be friendly, we fancy we discern the hand of a friend. If hostile, we flatter ourselves that we detect an enemy. Not that anybody is blessed with many enemies who can write elaborate criticisms: but still our outraged feelings are apt to insist upon the existence of personal dislike when our works are unfavourably treated.

There is one place, however, where we must admit that we are likely to hear the truth about ourselves, and our productions. The fact is, that Truth has, in these latter days, grown tired of living in such a damp place as the bottom of a well; and, moreover, like the rest of the world, has become restless, and fond of travelling

hither and thither in a railway carriage. At any rate that is where I think I met with a great deal of truthful comment on the foregoing essay.

It happened thus. I had taken my place in a railway carriage for the North of England, and was looking forward with some doubt as to the nature of my journey through the long day, which I knew would depend much upon the quality, pleasant or otherwise, of my companions. I watched them well as they took their places in the carriage. Three arrived together. One was a middle-aged man, with a worn, anxious look, carelessly dressed, partially bald, and very weary-looking. I could not help thinking that I had seen the face before; and, carefully interrogating my memory, I recollected that he was an influential person at some public office—an Under-Secretary of State, or something of that kind: and that he had been present with the minister when receiving a deputation of which I had been a member. I remember that he had asked one or two very shrewd questions, which were not those we were prepared to answer; and that we had quarrelled a little amongst ourselves when attempting to answer them, which had given the minister a great advantage. The other two passengers were, as I afterwards found out, lawyers going to the Assizes at ——. One of them was a jovial-looking, rubicund, imperative man, who is a leading member of the Circuit. As will afterwards be seen, he is a man who indulges in unmeasured assertions, and whose language on all occasions is strong. The other was a very refined young man, with

a long sharp nose, and a subtle expression of countenance, who evidently delighted in nice points of difference, and who seemed to think that he neglected his duty if he allowed any statement to pass unquestioned. From his careful mode of expression I conjectured that he was one of those young lawyers who write a great deal for the higher branches of the press ; but he had now got a case at the assizes which he much rejoiced to talk over with his rubicund friend and leader. There were two places left ; and these were soon filled by a lady, accompanied by a sickly looking deformed boy or youth (for it was difficult to tell his age) of whom she took the most tender care.

The lawyers and the statesman were not accompanied by any friends ; and their chief attachments seemed to be to their carpet-bags and their luggage. Troops of friends, however, came with the lady and the sickly youth ; and I observed that on parting she contrived to say something pleasant, or hopeful, or kindly, to each one of them. The sickly youth gazed languidly at his friends in all the apathy of sickness, but condescended to give a nod or two as the train moved slowly off.

The lady, who was of an uncertain age, making us doubt whether she was the mother, or the aunt, or the sister of the sickly boy, was one of those in whose eyes a history may be read. Pleasant and gracious, witty and sad, was the expression of her features, which were irregularly beautiful. Her voice was extremely sweet ; and, instinctively, every one in the carriage wished to pay some

attention to her, which was easily done, by making every arrangement for the comfort of the sick youth.

I thought to myself, something may be made out of this party, and the journey will not be dull, especially as the eyes of our rubicund friend in the corner gleam with an imperious merriment. He will be sure to break the ice of silence. I was little prepared, however, for what immediately happened. The pale young lawyer pulled out of his pocket my unfortunate essay; and said to the Statesman, "This is the pamphlet which the Serjeant and I were talking to you about at dinner yesterday. There are lots of things in it to be questioned, as I think,—so does the Serjeant :—but your business is Organization; and when you have skimmed it over, we might have some talk about it." "Skimmed it over," said I to myself; "and this is the way even the intelligent part of the public—men with noses like that—talk of productions which have cost us poor devils nights and days of anxious thought."

The "skimming-over" was effected in half an hour by the Statesman; and an animated conversation then began, of which I will endeavour to give some notion to the reader. As I must distinguish the personages, I will call the elder lawyer the "first lawyer," and the young man the "second lawyer," as we distinguish two bandits in a theatrical piece. The Under-Secretary I will call "the Statesman." Then there are "the Lady," and "the sickly youth;" and, lastly, there is myself, "the Author."

Second Lawyer. Well, sir, you have skimmed it over now. Of course I did not mean to say that the fellow (*this is the respectful recognition we have amongst the public*) was always clear in his ideas. Sometimes his organization is active: sometimes it is passive. Sometimes he merely means a plan; sometimes a policy: and sometimes his organization is only forethought. But there is a sort of an idea running through it all, which it might be worth while to consider.

First Lawyer. I would have one of them attached to the front of the engine of all the express trains, and no damages whatever should be recoverable if he were smashed to atoms.

Second Lawyer. My learned friend is not so precise as he would be if he were arguing before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn; but by "them" he certainly means railway directors; and he is evidently thinking of that part of the essay which relates to railway organization.

First Lawyer. The author is quite right when he speaks of the want of organization there. The station where we shall stop to dine, is a place where no animal but an ostrich could get a dinner. The book by which we have laboured to ascertain our times of departure and arrival, is a conglomeration of hideous confusion, which can be likened to nothing but the state of European policy at the present moment. If a fire should arise in this very carriage, six estimable persons would be needlessly burnt alive; two lawyers, of whose eminence, present and to come, it does not become me to speak: one statesman: a fair lady who would evidently be missed by a large circle of loving friends: an intelligent youth: and a great shipowner, or manufacturer (*this he said with a slight bow to me; though why he should have assumed that I was a ship-owner or manufacturer, I could not see. I returned the bow, merely saying the words "Not great, sir."*) I hope the world would miss us, and

that, if we were burnt alive, some simple process would be invented by which the passengers in any carriage could communicate with the guard.

The Author. One of the things most wanted in the world is, to bring special knowledge into general use.

Second Lawyer. I don't see what you mean, or how it applies.

The Author. Well, it will be difficult to explain. But what I mean is this : you see a difficulty overcome here, by this person ; and you know of various persons here and there who are labouring, or who ought to labour against the same difficulty ; and the special knowledge necessary never seems to reach their benighted minds.

I have often fancied I should like to take out a party of innkeepers, or a board of directors, on a travelling excursion, simply to show them how things are better done elsewhere.

The Statesman. Oh ! if you want to improve the administration of railways, I will tell you how to do it. Look out for a very ingenious, sickly man, with a large family——

The Lady. Poor fellow !

The Statesman.—And give him £4000 a year as an inspector of railways. Let him make short reports, in good English, of his sufferings on the different railways ; specifying names, dates, and every particular. He must be bound to travel, occasionally with his whole family, in the depth of winter.

The Lady. And only to receive £4000 a year ? I cannot think, sir, that you have had much experience of travelling with large families.

Second Lawyer. But do we not know all about these sufferings at present ?

The Statesman. Not sufficiently in detail. An ordinary person would be ashamed to describe these minutiae ; but it must be this man's business. Besides, seriously speaking, he would meet with great differences of treatment. One

thing is well managed on this railway, another on that. He would be able to praise, as well as to blame. There is one railway I know of, on which, to my judgment, the coupling of the carriages is not sufficiently attended to. There is another railway on which I have never found the same fault. My inspector would tell the world these things, and an effect would be produced upon the traffic of these lines.

First Lawyer. An official man is always an official man, and has a wild belief in the value of reports. According to him all celestial influences attend Blue Books.

The Author. Now, here is an instance of an organization proposed. I do not say whether it is wise or unwise, feasible or unfeasible; but it indicates something that may be done in the required direction. Did time permit, I could give many more instances of the advantages of bringing special knowledge to bear. And railway organization——

The Statesman. Oh! railway organization is sure to be attended to ultimately, when there have been eight or ten great accidents, happening near together in point of time, and during the session of parliament—for that is imperative. But political and official organization are what I confess interest me most.

The Author. I think you are right. I maintain that the world is more foolish now than it ever was. Look at France and England going on just like two vulgar people in a small town, outbidding each other in frantic expenses.

First Lawyer. I think I was not so far wrong in putting this gentleman down as a ship-owner or manufacturer—probably one of the peace party.

The Statesman. But yet, sir, you cannot maintain that our war expenditure is needless, and that our ministers are wrong in urging on the national defences?

The Author. I do not say that they are wrong. If I were in their place, I have no doubt I should do as they do. But I maintain that, if there were skilful political organiza-

tion in the great European family of nations, or even if there were skilful organization among the more intelligent men of each individual country (for they are all against war), this ruinous armed peace would have more chance of being brought to an end in our time.

Second Lawyer. Then you have read the pamphlet, sir?

The Author. Yes. It has been lying about upon our table at home, and I have often taken it up.

The Lady. It hardly becomes me to put in a word amongst you learned gentlemen; but I must say, for the honour of our sex, that if we had the management of affairs, we should not spend quite so much money as you gentlemen do upon warlike engines. Charles tells me [*who is Charles, I wonder? I hate Charles*] that one of these iron vessels costs £400,000. We women should think a great deal, and perhaps talk a little, before we expended that sum——

First Lawyer.—In anything but fancy goods, madam. (*We all laughed.*)

The Lady. Well, there would at any rate be something beautiful to show for our money.

Second Lawyer. And do you think you would long delight in these “fancy goods” my learned friend speaks of if there were not some of these dark floating creatures to defend the fancy goods, and the fair wearers thereof?

The Lady. I do not know. I am sure, though, we should not spend the money so recklessly as you do. We should keep more of it to buy tea and sugar with, and to improve our homes. The ladies in France would do the same, and so it would come to the same thing in the end.

Second Lawyer. You mean, madam, that both nations would be equally unprepared for defence, and that both nations would be far more comfortable, if the women had the management of affairs.

First Lawyer. I am sure, madam, you do manage us.

The Lady. No. You get away from us, and talk all night in parliament, and vote away our money without our having anything to say to it; and then come back again and say how much you have worked for your country.

First Lawyer. There is no arguing with a lady. She overcomes us at all points.

The Statesman. What a theme the present troubles in America¹ would have given the Author to show the want of organization! All the mischief there has risen from disorganization, political, social, military. If there had been an organised policy on the part of the North, war might never have been.

Second Lawyer. There, permit me to say, sir, you fall into the error of the Author. You mean that if there had been a profound and logical statement of the nature of the dispute, and of the remedies to be aimed at, war might have been prevented. But that is not organization.

The Author. I do not know. It is the result of organization, and it is the organization of thought.

The Statesman. Well, never mind the Author. He must take care of himself against the critics. But, to return to the subject. I admit that the Northern Americans have shown great want of organization; but that has not been their only, or perhaps their chief fault. Now, look at their wonderful boastfulness. There was a sentence in the President's last speech, that I think is, without exception, the most boastful and absurd I ever read in any public document. I have read not a few Blue Books; and assisted in the compounding of not a few of them; but I never read anything like this.

Second Lawyer. Well, what is "this?"

The Statesman. The President said that in many of his regiments there were men fit to form a Cabinet, a Council,

¹ This was written in 1862.

a Congress—perhaps even a Court. Now, from my position, I have seen a good many of the men who do form Cabinets, and Councils, and Congresses; and even of those who are in no great estimation with the public, the majority are rather remarkable personages. In looking round upon the men of our year [*nodding to the Serjeant*] at Oxford, you probably find only one or two fit to be in a Cabinet, a Council, a Congress, or even to adorn a Court; and yet an American regiment of volunteers is to furnish complete Councils, Cabinets, and Congresses. The absurdity is “tempestuous” as Sir Charles Wetherall would have said. I felt, when I read that sentence of the President’s that much evil must come upon a people whose chief magistrate could utter such wild nonsense, unrebuked. If there were any British statesman so absurd as to endeavour to put such a sentence before the chief personage in the land, to be uttered by her, we all must feel that there would be a refusal to utter it. And yet no doubt the Queen has as high an opinion of her regiments as the President can justly have of his.

First Lawyer. You are quite right. The absurdity is gigantic.

The Statesman. Future historians will ask why there was not more sympathy in England with the Northern Americans at the present crisis. We care a great deal about slavery: we naturally feel much for a people speaking our own language, and having many of our own modes of thinking: there are, in short, hundreds of ties between the two peoples: but their boasting has disgusted, and, to a certain extent, alienated us.

Moreover, however much we were disposed to sympathize with the North, we could not approve of, nor adopt, their language in speaking of the South. We did not think that “rebels” was the right word to apply to the men of the South; and we could not imagine that a union would ever be cemented by conquest.

The Author. The Americans are mistaken if they suppose that there are not a great many persons in England, who feel the deepest, and most painful interest in the present hideous contest. For my own part, I could sit down, and mourn, and utter doleful Jeremiads without end.

But, to tell the truth, my sorrowing is not so much for the combatants, or for the present generation : they have their amusement and their excitement. My grief is for poor people in the future, who will know, as we know, the full bitterness of large taxation. It was a comfort to think that there was at least one people on the earth to whom the tax-gatherer was not a terror ;—who, after the death of a head of a family, were not to see their mother's trinkets and their father's old familiar watch appraised, in order to ascertain to the minutest farthing the personal property which the deceased had possessed. We have become accustomed to these things ; but they are horrors. And what are they but the results of the great wars of former generations ?

The eminent Americans we have seen in this country have, for the most part, been persons who would be likely to give a very favourable impression of their country. Such men as Mr. Sumner, Mr. Everett, Mr. Bancroft, Mr. Emerson, Mr. Ticknor, Mr. Motley, Mr. Hawthorne, would do honour to any country. But, somehow or other, you do not in American state papers see many traces of these men.

Then, as regards the eminent authoress we have seen here, Mrs. Stowe : Was there ever a more gentle or pleasant lioness ? At least, from what I have heard, considering her astounding success, coming all at once and suddenly upon her, she bore her honours most meekly.

The Second Lawyer. Even as regards ordinary Americans, such as you meet abroad travelling. I think you cannot fail to be struck with their good-nature, even when

they commence blowing their tiresome national trumpet. It is the boastfulness of young people. One thinks of that saying about "a young bear with all its troubles to come;" and now these troubles have come upon the nation.

First Lawyer. Who ever invented that saying about the young bear? and why should a bear have more troubles than the rest of the animal family? There's a question for an examination paper.

Author. I am sure I can get some marks then for an answer. The proverb, no doubt, arose in bear-baiting times. We, having become more humane, have lost our appreciation of the proverb.

Second Lawyer. Well, in talking over the matter, we have become quite tolerant as regards individual Americans.

The Author. I think you were somewhat hard upon the disposition of the Americans, even as gathered from their state papers. The rest of the world are quite as absurd; only more measured in talk and more decorous. I go back to the reckless expenditure upon armies among all the chief nations in Europe.

Second Lawyer. You know the theory of some learned divine, that the human race goes mad at times, and, of course, like other mad people, does not suspect its own madness.

The Author. Yes; and some other ingenious person has maintained that this madness has generally prevailed in the middle of centuries.

The Statesman. Oh! that's too absurd: recollect the French Revolution. I am quite willing to admit the previous proposition.

The Author. It is in one of its warlike madresses now. And when this is the case, and when great potentates possess huge armies, you feel that, if this difficult question, or that complication of affairs, were by good fortune to be amicably settled, the main cause of terror would still remain.

Have you ever been in the West Indies? [*They answered in the negative.*] Well, you take a solitary walk there; and, looking over the imbrowned plain, you cannot discern a living creature. No wood is near: no sheltering crags. The air is hideously still, perhaps before some coming hurricane. A snake glides out from under a stone; and, with instinctive fear, and the aversion which there is between man and that reptile, you strike it with your stick. It lies dying on the ground. If you are a denizen of those regions, you look round upon the whole horizon for something to come: and it does come. Slowly, from a distant point, there rises a hideous, ungainly bird, the gallinazo, which, wheeling round in circles, swoops down upon the snake almost before you have had time to move away.

That is just to my mind what there is at present in the politics of the world. At the stillest moment, on the smallest cause of encounter, wherever there is the slightest prospect of misfortune, this obscene bird of war is ready to sweep down upon the spot. Its perception of prey is superhuman: it is sure to be present where there is any the least, hope of evil.

Second Lawyer. Yes, sir, but how is this evil to be prevented? What is the good of pretending peace when there is no peacefulness?

The Author. I tell you what will happen some day. If scientific men really give their minds to the destruction of their fellow-creatures, they will invent something which will throw all your Armstrong guns into shade. I believe in the virtues of Lord Dundonald's discovery. If I had made any similar discovery, I really think I should have told it openly to the world, in the hope that the easy destructibility of human beings might put a stop to this mania for destruction. Some day there will come the knowledge of the means of creating a pestilence.

Second Lawyer. This is a pleasant look-out for the human

race. But I am by no means sure that this gentleman is not right. I should be sorry, Serjeant, to be tempted with the knowledge of some vapour which could destroy, in a moment, all my seniors at the bar. I suppose, though, I should never use it, for fear of its being used against me by my juniors; and the knowledge that there was such a vapour in everybody's power would make everybody very civil to everybody else.

The Author. You will think me, perhaps, a very fanciful and romantic person; but my wonder is, and always has been, that our knowledge of astronomy, only gained in comparatively modern times, has not dwarfed and crushed ambition. It is such a little bit of a thing, this earth. What is there to make one desirous, wading through fire and water and blood, to reign over any part of it? It was different when men believed it to be the abode of gods and demi-gods, and that it was the only created thing of any magnitude.

Sickly Youth. Sirius is said to be about a million of miles in diameter: (*the lady looked at him very proudly*).

The Author. Yes, it is. But I would also rely upon other facts and conjectures. You see, it is now conjectured that there have been a series of deluges, and that there will be, at no very distant time, a sweeping off again of us little, cantankerous, quarrelsome men into the depths of the sea.

The Lady. Pardon me for repeating that, if we women ruled affairs, even if we did not know these learned conclusions (and certainly I never knew them before to-day), we should not be so quarrelsome as you gentlemen are: for are we not more prudent and homely?

First Lawyer (turning to me). Bless my heart, sir; some two or three thousand people know what you and I know about these scientific matters, and you suppose that such an inconsiderable number can influence the whole world.

Second Lawyer. I do not know why they should not.

The Author. If there were organization——

The Statesman. The week's business is enough for the week: and, as to looking much further, that is what neither statesmen nor stockbrokers ever do.

The Author. That is just what I complain of; and what I believe this writer is aiming at.

Second Lawyer. You seem always to be ready to defend the writer. You must be a great friend of his. Do you know him?

The Author. A little. But I am anything but a friend of his;—one of his worst enemies;—perhaps his chief one.

The Statesman. Well, I see we should never agree on these great subjects which he has suggested to us; but I do thoroughly agree with what he says about the organization of pleasure. The head of my office once said, "Life would be very tolerable if it were not for its pleasures." Is not that a witty saying; and so true? By the way, I don't think you would get such a brilliant *mot* out of any of these American regiments that are to furnish Councils, and Cabinets, and Congresses.

Second Lawyer. And perhaps Courts. Do not forget that.

First Lawyer. I, too, think the part about pleasure not bad. But this lady, like the rest of her sex, is, I doubt not, one of the guilty persons in the great offence of making pleasure so uncomfortable. Pray, madam, why do you all crowd your parties in the way you do? Why do you have a dancing-tea at which one cannot dance?

Second Lawyer. Yes, madam, I must follow on the same side. Why do you have a dancing-tea at which my learned friend cannot dance, I ask?

The Lady. I can answer that question. It is because you gentlemen make business enter into all pleasures. "If you ask the So-and-soes, my dear, you must ask the Thises

and the Thats." The obedient wife does ask the Thises and the Thats; and there is an unpleasant crowd.

First Lawyer. Upon my word, madam, there is no use in arguing with you. You always conquer us, else, perhaps, I could say something about dress.

Lady. Pray say it, sir; or rather pray do not say it, for I think I know pretty well all that you will say. The truth is, we are foolish; you are foolish; everybody, I believe, is foolish in dress: and the silliest people in the world guide us all in this matter, and set the fashions.

First Lawyer. Well, madam, you have at least made a candid confession.

But I see that, while we have been talking, you have been looking at the essay. What do you think of it?

Lady. There is a great deal I don't understand; but there is one thing I like, and that is, that the author always takes his examples from common life. I can't help fancying that I was at that great festivity he speaks of where it was so difficult to get away. I had two gentlemen to assist me, and they were four hours hunting after the carriage; and at last they did not find it, but I found it myself.

First Lawyer. Dark carriage, of course, ma'am? Now if you had had cream-colour picked out with red, you would have found it in a quarter of an hour.

Lady. Yes; but one would be so stared at in such a carriage.

First Lawyer. It may be unfortunate for you, ma'am; but you will always be stared at. (*Here he gave a self-satisfied smile, as if he felt that he had now said a really pretty thing: we laughed, and the lady blushed and smiled.*)

The Author (addressing the lady). I am sure the essayist would be much obliged to you for your approval of common instances. I, too, am quite with him and with you in this matter. What is the good of bringing in Hannibal and the Alps, or the battle of Marathon, the choice of Hercules, or

the retreat of the Ten Thousand, to illustrate something which can be well shown by Hodge in the hay-field?

What grand examples have been brought forward to illustrate the intense intolerance of human nature! the fate of the Waldenses; the Albigenses; the Lollards; the Wickliffites! None of them afford so good an instance as a simple story I know about mustard, which I have heard told at dinner-tables amidst roars of laughter.

Statesman. Pray tell it us, sir.

First Lawyer. A good story is one of the blessings of life.

The Author. A good story once, I think, saved my life.

Second Lawyer. This is wandering from the subject.

First Lawyer. Oh, hang the subject! You clever young men are so pedantic.

The Author. Well, I will not tell the story myself, but will describe another person telling it—the witty and scientific L——.

He would ask us, generally at dinner time, *à propos* of mustard, whether we had heard his story about that much approved condiment. Those who had not heard it said “No,” and begged to hear it; and those who had heard it, clamoured to hear it again. Upon this he would send the servant for a *Times* newspaper, and, when he had got it, would thus begin:—

We are at a coffee-house. You, Jones [*choosing some one who had heard the story before*], are having your dinner brought upon the table—a juicy beefsteak. I have just finished mine at the same table. I look off from my paper, and pass the mustard to you. You must always decline.

L——. Mustard, sir?

Jones. Thank you (*but does not take it*).

L—— (*looking baffled, and cross, and reads on a little*).
You will take mustard, sir?

Jones. No thank you, I don't.

L—— (After more impatient reading, and glancing round his paper to peep at Jones). Most persons take mustard, sir, with beefsteak.

Jones. I seldom or never do, sir.

L—— (Attempts to get interested in a railway accident and mutters—"Three lives lost—the stoker escaped by a miracle. No blame can be attached to any of the officers of the Company." *L——* continues to look round his paper over and over again at Jones. At last he exclaims angrily :) It is a most extraordinary thing, sir, not to eat mustard with beefsteak. I never did such a thing in my life.

Jones (calmly). Perhaps not.

L—— (Turns to his paper, and attempts again to read, but manifests a state of strong excitement. Once or twice he stretches out his hand, and withdraws it again. At last he can bear it no longer. He throws down the Times; and, taking up the mustard-pot, exclaims :) Damn it, sir, you must and shall have mustard! (and he daubs Jones's plate over with it).

The company, servants and all, are convulsed with laughter, and *L——* resumes his dinner with all the air of a triumphant anecdote-teller after a great success.

Now, I ask you, is not that the best story to illustrate the intense intolerance of human nature you ever heard? Have you not all found that everybody is anxious to force his mustard upon your beef, whether you like it or not? That story contains eighty-three sermons.

First Lawyer. And a hundred and thirty-five essays.

Author. And two hundred charges to the Grand Jury. But now I will be as serious as you like, and go back into the subject, and please this gentleman.

The Lady. I believe it is I who deserve to be scolded as the cause of this digression, in praising the author for having taken his instances from common life.

The Statesman. There are some instances which he has failed to take, and which, to my mind, would have been better than any he has taken.

The Ordnance Survey ought to have been given as an admirable instance of organization.

First Lawyer. Stop. Let us each give an instance. (*We all agreed.*) Well, I say nowhere is organization more wanted than at a public meeting. All goes wrong if two or three clever fellows have not met before, and drawn up all the resolutions, with a paper of agenda for the chairman. At the meeting everything must go like clock-work. Who is to propose, and who is to second, a resolution, must be absolutely settled. There must be no detestable modesty of people conspicuously bowing to one another, and saying, "No sir, not I: I am not of importance enough in the county," etc. etc. The meeting must go off swiftly and cheerfully; and that can only be done by previous organization.

The Author. Very true. I will give you another instance—a wedding breakfast. Even that miserable transaction may be made to go off well, if the proceedings have been well arranged beforehand, and there are no dreary intervals allowed for tears.

The Lady. Then, a musical party. How that mostly fails for want of some despotic person to arrange beforehand everything that shall be done, so that there may be no weak consultations round the piano, or wishes expressed that there had been some "part music" there which is not there.

Second Lawyer. And a consultation at a leading counsel's chambers.

First Lawyer. No, no: we won't have any reference to the shop: but it is not a bad instance though.

Sickly Youth. And a paper-chase at school over difficult country.

First Lawyer. Well done, my man: yours is a very

good instance : and I tell you this,—that the boy who had run well across country, and had shown great judgment in baffling his pursuers at a paper-chase, should have a lot of marks for it at any examination at Woolwich, if I were an examiner. But I am afraid, my good fellow, you would have been rather out of place at such a run.

Sickly Youth. I was always consulted, though, by the “foxes” beforehand ; and so I got the nick name of “the lame old fox.”

First Lawyer. Well, we have all given our instances ; and they are not to be despised, I think.

But now, if you will allow me, I will take up another part of the essay, and tell you something that Sir William Follett once said to me. Give me the book. This is the passage : it is where the author is speaking of the qualities of a good organizer. “It must take some time to ascertain of any man that he is clear and constant in his main purpose, and is not to be led away from it by the dexterous fulfilment of smaller ends and aims.”

I doubt whether the man himself sees all that there is in that passage.

The Author. Why should he not have seen it, as this passage suggested the idea to you ? But perhaps he did not. However, what did Sir William Follett say ?

First Lawyer. “Remember that every piece of business is involved in difficulties, and that a great difference between a good and a bad legal practitioner consists in the ability or disability to estimate the practical value of the difficulties, and to dismiss from his thoughts those that he does not feel to be of practical importance.”

The Statesman. It is wonderfully good ; and all the more so, that it seems but commonplace. The sense of proportion is wanting in most of our minds when we come to deal with difficulties.

The Author. I am entirely with you. Three difficulties

are started. Two of them, perhaps, are practically unimportant, but we are apt to think that they are respectively equal in value to the third, because each of them takes up as much room in our mind at the moment as the third does. The two difficulties, which may be unimportant in life, are important, logically speaking ; and so sometimes they have a most unjustifiable hold upon us.

The Statesman. Yes, a great business is delayed sometimes because some difficult point, which is in every sense but a point, cannot be settled.

First Lawyer. I have known an expense of several pounds incurred in replying to a requisition that the title to a rent should be proved strictly, the rent being one penny a year for less than ninety-nine years, and forming, by accident, part of a large property which was to be mortgaged. These things are the opprobrium of law.

The Author. No, no ; you are too hard upon law. I would rather say these things are the opprobrium of life, for we are all greatly deficient in that just sense of proportion which this gentleman insisted upon.

Statesman. I have something to say on the general subject, which has struck me : it is not deep, but I think it is important. The writer leads us naturally to consider various kinds of organization. Now it appears to me, after going over several notorious instances of mal-organization, that the error consists in not having considered from the first what a serious thing organization is. "Oh ! that will do for the beginning," men say ; "we can alter afterwards." But they *don't* alter afterwards ; and the organization grinds on ; assumes a powerful name : becomes a great system almost before you are aware : and it is very difficult to make the thing ungrind.

Author. Ah ! the beginning of everything is solemn. Now I am delighted to find—I am afraid I shall be scolded by this gentleman for wandering again from the point—but

I say I am delighted to find that poets and painters are discovering that the break of day is not joyous, but, rather, awful. "Jocund" is not a good adjective for morn.

Advancing, strewed the earth with orient pearls.

What are the lines, young gentleman? [*turns to the sickly youth.*] You know them, I daresay—that's the advantage of being young; one has learnt everything lately.

Sickly Youth.

"Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearls."

not "strewed" but "sow'd."

Author. Instead of all that, the morn seems to me to come in so mournfully. There are the slight, streaky clouds, that are to become ominous in an hour or two, and are to fall in the course of the next twelve hours: throughout nature there is an unpleasant, nervous stillness: there is a depressing blankness of colour: and, altogether, the day seems to be saying, "Here am I, about to bring much trouble and tribulation to most persons, and a little content—only to those who are already contented."

Statesman. You don't take a cheerful view of life, sir.

First Lawyer. I would rather go back to the essay, I think. What do you say, madam?

Lady. We ladies are generally said to like what is sentimental and melancholy; but I am quite contented to go back to the essay.

Second Lawyer. One of the great difficulties under which it will labour, as regards popular acceptance, is, that most people are so apt to connect organization, in their minds, with centralization. Now, of course, a man may organize with a view to decentralization.

The Author. I think, sir, the author should feel very grateful to you for pointing out a misconception which is very likely to arise.

First Lawyer. I think, however, the author would not be so much obliged to my learned friend for pointing out, as he did at the beginning of the conversation, that when the author speaks of organization, the simple word "plan" might as well have been used. For my own part, I feel that some part of the essay (and the part I like best) might simply be resolved into this—that men do not ask themselves what they mean by doing a thing. It is so often that they imitate, when they should act independently. Now I will take you into a subject which has apparently little to do with what we have been discussing; but yet I can see that the author, in one particular instance, has had it in his mind. I take colour as my subject. It has always appeared to me that, especially in this country, colours are laid on without any view to the purposes for which they are used. You see everywhere the darkest colours employed, where light colours should be chosen if there were any reasoning at all upon the subject. Now a light colour wears best, and is the most distinguishable; yet you will find that dark colours are greatly used for boundaries, which of course are better the more distinguishable they are. This is the case with the palisading of all our great towns. I believe, if you were to examine into the cause, it would be nothing more nor less than fashion. Oddly enough, the idea of gentility has been associated with darkness of colour, and this idea has pervaded the whole country. Much, therefore, of what the essayist has been protesting against, is merely the result of people continuing to do something without a sufficient reason.

The Statesman. The passport system which he alluded to is a good instance of that. By the way, the essay must have been written some time ago, at least before the French Emperor took such a wise step as he did towards abolishing passports.

Second Lawyer. And before the American President introduced them.

The Author. I agree with much of what these learned gentlemen have said : indeed, I have always maintained that half the work of the world is useless ; that it cannot give a good account of itself, if subjected to severe scrutiny. My idea of organization would be to diminish much of this useless work. I always think of the boy¹ who was employed at certain intervals to open a valve, or shut a valve, or something of that kind, in some complicated machinery ; and who found that by attaching a string to two pieces of the machinery the purpose was effected, and he was left to play at marbles. There is a result of skilful organization in the saving of trouble.

The Statesman. Of course a thing may be elaborate but yet mal-organized. That is the case with pleasures. You see I like to return to that branch of the subject. The pains taken about pleasure are excessive : the results are dolorous.

Now, there is a great fuss being made about the question of education just at present. It is one of the subjects omitted, or rather slightly treated, by the essayist, and yet perhaps it opens the widest field for wise organization.

The Author. It is a bold thing in me to say ; but I do think there are the most enormous errors afloat about education.

Second Lawyer. There must be enormous errors in a subject which is the greatest in the world except war ; and it is not likely that mankind have hit off the right thing at once. But pray tell us, sir, any one of these large errors.

The Author. Well, I think, then, that we misconstrue the results that we get from inspection and examination. I will explain what I mean.

¹ The Author had forgotten that he had used this illustration in the essay, but it was not noticed.

You must all have read or heard of the answer which was given by a child of eleven years of age to the question, "What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?"

First Lawyer. Oh yes, I remember laughing heartily over it. I have forgotten the words though.

The Author. I think I can recollect the first part of it. "My dooty tords my nabers, is to love him as thyself, and to do to all men as I wed thou shall do und to me, to love, onner, and suke my farther, and mother, to onner and to bay the Queen, and all that are pet in a forty under her, to smit myself to all my goones, teachers, sportial pastures and marsters."

Now, I have studied that answer very carefully, and I maintain that there is no reason for thinking that the child did not understand its duty towards its neighbour very well,—as well, perhaps, as the witty and accomplished inspector who examined the child. Consider the words. When the child said that it was its duty "to onner and to bay the Queen, and all that are pet in a forty under her," don't you think that the child had sufficient knowledge in that matter for all practical purposes! Omit the words "in a forty," which perhaps conveyed but a dim idea of "in authority" to the child, is there not enough left to show that the child understood that it was to obey the Queen and the clergyman of the parish, and the neighbouring justice of the peace, and the parish constable? Again, when it used the words, "sportial pastures and marsters," do you doubt that it included the master of the school; and so on, throughout? The main sense of the passage may have been thoroughly in the child's mind.

The Statesman. The vice of the age is an unwholesome belief in examinations.

The Author. I am rather disposed to agree with you.

Second Lawyer. I don't: I believe examinations have already done a great deal of good.

The Author. Now I am going to ask you all a question, and I hope you will give me a true answer.

The Lady. That would be a large promise to make, sir.

Second Lawyer. Well, I daresay we shall answer it truly, if it is not a very unpleasant question.

The Author. When you were very juvenile, and were asked, "Who was the father of Zebedee's children?" did you answer the question directly, or, indeed, could you answer it at all?

Now I do not believe that I am inferior to the average of mankind. They think a good deal of me in my parish: and I was very near being made a justice of the peace. I am a Tithing-man, if you know what that is, which is more than I do, though I hold the office. [*They all laughed.*]

Well, I confess that when a burly man dressed in black, with a huge bunch of seals dangling from his fob (for that was the fashion in my young days), called me to him, unfortunately just after my fond father had been praising my remarkable abilities, and in a pompous voice said, "Well young gentleman, and who was the father of Zebedee's children?" I was nonplussed. I turned over in my juvenile mind everything I had read and heard about Zebedee; but this important fact respecting the paternity of Zebedee's children had hitherto escaped my attention. I thought it was a very deep question. I imagined that I must be shamefully ignorant of Scripture history. I was mortified; my father looked mortified: and I slunk away as a little ignoramus who had been much overpraised by a fond parent. Nor did any of you fare any better?

First Lawyer. I am not sure that I could answer the question now; but I have no doubt that I disgraced myself when it was asked me some fifty years ago.

Second Lawyer. And I too.

The Statesman. And I.

The Author. And you, madam?

The Lady. I believe I answered it.

The Author. Well, but you 'women are so prematurely clever: as Henry Taylor says, you grow on the sunny side of the wall. If you were asked the question at eleven years of age, you were equal to us at fourteen.

Well, young gentleman, and you?

Sickly Youth. Oh! I didn't.

The Author. It appears that a large majority of us ought to be very tender and tolerant in considering any answers made by children of eleven years of age.

But to consider the matter more seriously, I repeat that I quite agree with this gentleman (the Statesman) about the over weight given to examinations in modern times. Take your own craft: do you think that you would have found out the exact merits of Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, Lord Granville, Lord Derby, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Gladstone by examination? Do you think they would have held their proper places in an examination?

The Statesman. They would not have been low down.

Second Lawyer. I am not sure of that.

The Author. Nor I: there is a certain indocility in the minds of men who have much in them. But what I mean is much more than that. Mr. Carlyle has said that Genius consists in an immense capacity for taking trouble.

First Lawyer. That is against you: those who succeed in examinations have taken a great deal of trouble.

Second Lawyer. Decidedly.

The Author. Ah! but I don't mean to abide by his definition: I mean to carry the definition a step or two higher. I say that it consists in an immense capacity for taking interest; and, when applied to statesmanship, in taking interest in many things. Also, in courage.

Now, where was the source of Pitt's greatness? Surely there were many men of his day a great deal cleverer than he was: but few there were who felt so deeply for

England, or cared so much for any matter that they had in hand.

Circumstances which I need not mention, made me early acquainted with Pitt's mode of working. It was intense. It is quite true, as stated in the essay, that he would shut himself up for hours with a bill, and the men who knew anything about it; and so he would master the bill. I maintain that you cannot find out this spirit in a man by examination. And how, I would ask, can you find out about a man's courage by examination? And courage, moral courage, is one of the highest and rarest qualities in the transaction even of ordinary business.

First Lawyer. I don't agree with you at all. This capacity for taking interest, and this courage, I contend, are to some extent shown in the acquisition of knowledge. Well, then, I say the knowledge in itself is valuable. Consider what little time any of us have, after our first youth, for learning anything.

Of course, you don't find out the whole nature of a man by examining him in French, Latin, History, or Mathematics; but you find out something which in my judgment requires to be found out.

In no service will the advantage of this system of examination be more discernible than in the army.

I believe that already I can see great improvement there among the young men.

The Author. Well, all I can say is, that the system requires to be very carefully watched. We must not suppose that the whole man is found out by an examination. Success in an examination must not be allowed to have too much influence afterwards.

First Lawyer. It will not. In life, men favour others according as they find them serviceable. Attorneys do not ask whether I took honours, or not, but whether there is a chance of my getting a verdict. To myself, it is a great

advantage that I learnt a little mathematics when I was young, in order to get a good place at an examination. I am sure I should never have known anything about them otherwise.

Second Lawyer. But now, to come back to organization,—for I am always bringing you back to that subject,—what are its functions in social matters, such as education and sanitary work?

The Author. Well, the main functions are clear. There are things which government can do, and ought to do, and which individuals, or small communities, cannot. You must so organize as to contrive that local authorities shall not hang upon the government, and that government shall do its own especial work, which may justly be very small, and yet may be most important.

The Statesman. This is a little vague, sir.

The Author. Try me in any particular instance.

The Statesman. There is a sudden outbreak of fever in a town.

The Author. Well, if there is anything remarkable about it, the government may send down to inspect, and then aid the town with that special knowledge which must be greatest at the centre of affairs. But upon the local authority must be thrown the responsibility of removing the causes of the fever, if those causes can be discovered.

One of the greatest triumphs of organization must be justly to divide governmental from local action.

The Statesman. But, in education what do you say?

The Author. I merely say this, that the want of education is a want which can never be so easily perceived by the mass of men as the want of good air, good water, and good drainage. And therefore, there requires just that degree of additional governmental aid which would counterbalance the additional difficulty created by the want of perception of the good to be aimed at, or the evil to be avoided.

The Statesman. I believe this is all true ; but how difficult it is to work up to these nice boundaries in practice. The moment you have any system organized, it is eager to extend beyond its just boundaries.

The Author. Then that is spurious organization ; or rather it is organization which is incomplete, because it does not provide the necessary checks upon its own action. You come at last to this : that if you would rightly organize anything which has life in it, such as a community of men, you must have a living organization which can vary, withhold, or rescind all that is merely formulary, and that depends solely upon rules. When a monarchy, or a republic, or a church, or a system of education, falls into decay, it is because the organization has not been renewed from the fountain of its being, and is partially a dead thing. It is imitative and formal, not creative. If it grows it is but in one direction : it is dead somewhere. Why do these railways fail, which this learned gentleman is so bitter against ? Because there is not enough of new mind thrown into the working of them.

Second Lawyer. There is one idea which this essayist seems never to have entertained ; namely, that organization may be used for very bad purposes, and that the growth and success of one form of organization may be fatal to many others that would have been preferable to it.

The Statesman. He must have thought of that : it is as obvious as daylight. All the great tyrannies that have arisen in the world, whether priestly, imperial, or democratic, have all arisen from some one department of human affairs being well organized, and being surrounded by feeble organisms.

First Lawyer. The press furnishes another instance.

The Author. Yes : if you were to have a predominant newspaper in a colony, supremely well organized, of course its tendency would be most dangerous. There would be so little established that could check it.

The Statesman. The danger from the press, not so much to freedom of thought, as to independence of thought, is most formidable everywhere.

First Lawyer. The hardship to individuals is frightful to contemplate.

I was engaged in a case some time ago in which a good, simple, trusting individual, my client, had been done out of £600 or £700. In some way the case came before the courts, though I believe my client would have been delighted to pay the money for the experience, and never to have heard a word more about the matter. In two or three days' time out came a flaming article in a leading journal, taking for its text the innocent folly of my trustful client. I could not help feeling what an over-severe punishment it was.

Second Lawyer. Yes. I hold with the nigger who said, "If preachy, preachy; if floggy, floggy: but not preachy and floggy too, Massa."

The Author. That is exactly it. A poor devil now gets both "preachy" and "floggy" too, even for an innocent blunder.

I was very much struck the other day, in taking up a newspaper, to see that three out of four of the leading articles were comments upon private persons, and private affairs. This will gradually become a thorough invasion of the liberty of the subject. I am quite of the opinion of a man who is said by those who know him, to be one of the wisest of our generation.

"I should hate," he said, "in short, to live in a land where men should act in multitudes, and think in multitudes, and be free in multitudes."

The Statesman. And then, too, accusations are made which are not merely inaccurate, but absolutely aimed at the wrong person. Of course in official life I have seen that. I have seen article after article come out in a leading newspaper against a man, for something which he had no

more to do with than I had. I remember, when I was a juvenile in office, saying to a certain statesman who was undergoing this blackening, "Why, my lord, do you not write a letter to the paper, and tell them that you are not the man?" He smiled and replied, "Don't you see I should be always writing letters? Cannot you imagine that the next accusation which might be brought against me, I might not be able to explain without implicating other people, or betraying the intentions of the Government? You, too, my young friend," continued the old statesman, "may have plenty of this sort of thing to endure in the course of your life, and you must learn to endure it, and work on patiently." I have been too obscure to have had much occasion to prove the soundness of his advice, but I hope if I had been much abused I should have learned to hold my tongue under it.

The Author. What I am always afraid of is, that at some critical juncture of our affairs, the officers in command will not be thinking so much of answering for their deeds to the Government at home, as to the writers of leading articles. We may not always have Dukes of Wellington to command our armies, and we may lose a campaign by the susceptibility to newspaper comments of officers high in command.

Second Lawyer. Well, but what can organization do in this matter?

The Statesman. Nothing more, I suppose, than organize opposition to the great powers of the press, whatever they may be.

First Lawyer. Yes. Encourage in every way any publication which shows signs of independent thought. Now there is a review which I delight in (though I know it meant me the other day when it was writing about a certain Serjeant Bluster), because it always barks on the other side to the great barker, and so we get some chance of freedom.

The Author. I quite sympathize with you. I was rejoiced



to find from a friend who takes great interest in such matters, that the sale of some of the newspapers which have no great name, one of which was absolutely unknown to me, is enormous. There, I thought to myself, is a chance of some counterpoise.

I think the admirable way in which, for the most part, the leading portion of the press in England is conducted, tends greatly to disguise the danger there is in it to independence of thought and action. In America the present evil is greater; but the danger of future evil may be less. However, this is too large a subject for us to attempt to discuss fully unless we were all going to the Hebrides together.

The Lady. I must say that I think we women care much less about newspaper articles than you gentlemen. I often have to console my husband [*oh, she is married then*] when something is written against him in the newspapers; and I generally persuade him that some little domestic matter is far more important to us. They might write leading articles against me from morning till night, if I could always manage my cook well.

First Lawyer. Yes. It is all very well, ma'am; but you do not govern—at least ostensibly; or plead; or preach; or command armies; or conduct diplomacy: otherwise you would not make so light of the power of the press. I believe that those ladies who do come before the public, such as actresses, and singers, and female artists and authors, are quite as sensitive to newspaper comment as we are.

The Lady. I doubt it, but I cannot really answer for them.

Second Lawyer. How did we get into this discussion about the press?

The Statesman. As an instance of dangerous organization; and some one said that the author never seemed to contemplate the possibility of dangerous organization.

The Author. I have always divided mankind into two great classes. The one consists of men who seem to be isolated from the human race, and who make the most of everything that goes ill, public or private. The other consists of men who seem to feel strongly the affinity of the rest of the human race to themselves; who make the best of everything they come in contact with; and who rather wish well than otherwise to all forms of human endeavour. These main divisions predominate over all diversities of temperament, and even of disposition. For instance, a man shall be selfish or egotistical, and yet belong to the second great division. I always fancy that this depends upon an innate perception of some central truth concerning the fortunes of the human race, and of how, in some mysterious way, all of us as individuals partake these fortunes. As I flatter myself that I belong to the second division before referred to, I can easily comprehend how the essayist has omitted to dwell upon the evil uses of organization. He probably thought that organization, if improved, would be sure to further the welfare of mankind, thinking, for his own part, chiefly of the good uses. I should have made the same mistake myself.

Second Lawyer. It is an oversight, however skilfully, or romantically, you may endeavour to account for it.

First Lawyer. Well, we must admit that there is nothing like discussion for making time pass. We have been talking over this dull subject without feeling dulness; and here we are at Boredon, where they will give us what they fondly and delusively call a dinner.

We got out at Boredon, which was the station for my departure by another train; so I took leave of my companions, feeling somewhat pleased that I had made a battle for my offspring. But that Second Lawyer is a

pestilent fellow for dividing and defining. He will find out a great many faults in the essay when it is published, and will show them up in some review or other. And there will be a great deal of justice in what he will say. It is almost impossible to keep one's language quite correct in discussing a subject that enters in such a mixed manner into so many and such various human affairs. However, they may criticise as they like, they will not persuade me that we could not organize a great deal more skilfully than we are in the habit of doing, and that organization is not one of the most remunerative products of the human mind.

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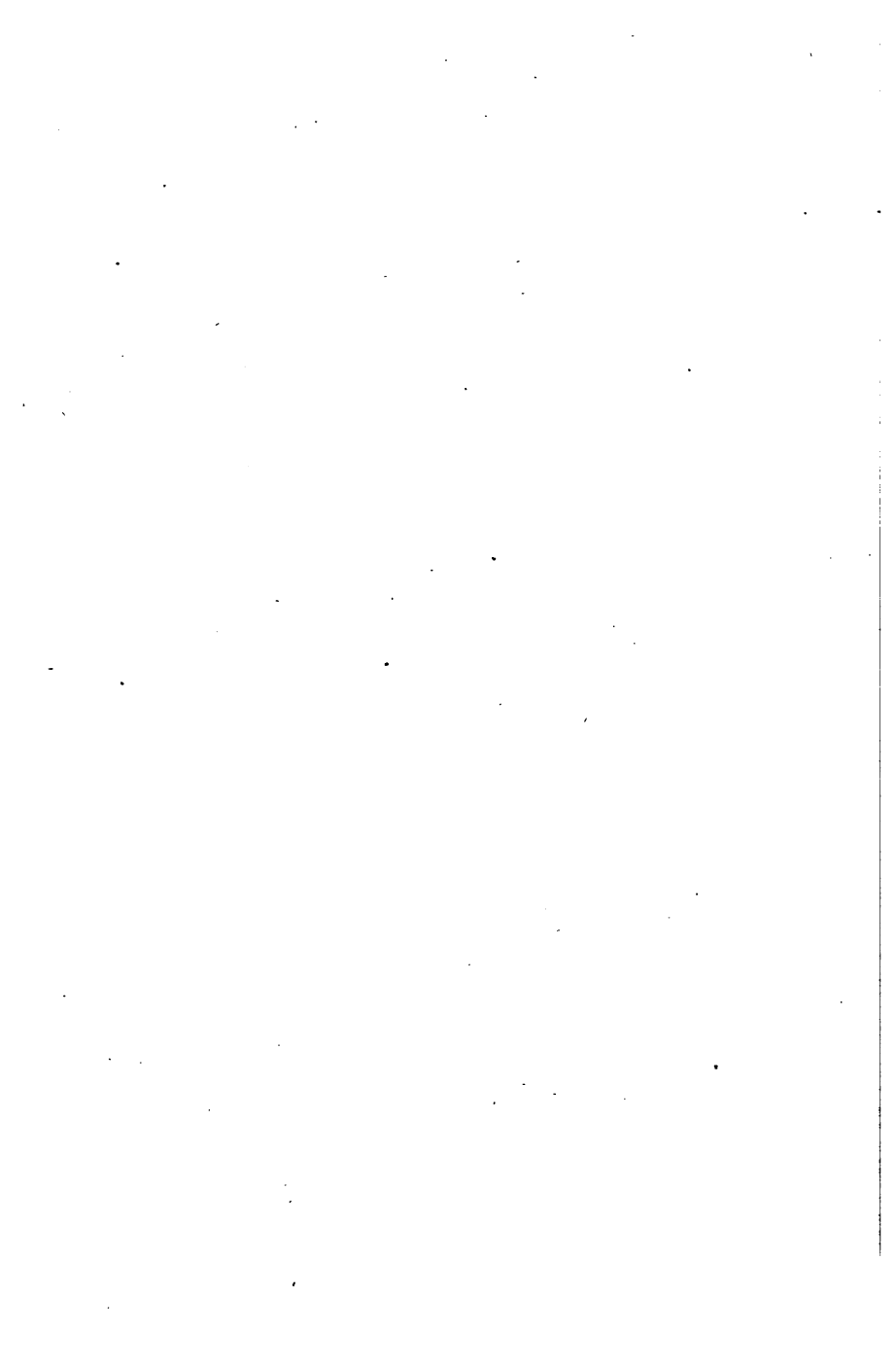
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